

Monday March 16 1998

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The Guardian

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Ed Balls, the man behind the man

Why the Chancellor needs his Balls

G2 with European weather



The 10-year-old seasoned pop star:

Aaron and her bodyguard

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J'Accuse Roy Greenslade:

Dirty trick, Guys

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BBC bans its name in scratchcard ads row

Kamal Ahmed
Media Correspondent

THE BBC has banned its name from scratchcard advertisements for the first time in a last-ditch effort to distance the corporation from one of the most controversial programmes it has ever broadcast.

The BBC's National Lottery Big Ticket Show, where the public have to buy the £2

scratchcard to win a chance to appear on the programme, has been widely condemned by politicians and church organisations as the "biggest gambling show in history". One source closely involved in the programme, to be launched on March 28, described it as "a 50-minute advert for Camelot" — the lottery operator which is putting up a £100,000 first prize for the show from the National Lottery prize fund.

After a series of backroom battles, Camelot and MacLau-

rin Communications, which is handling the huge publicity drive for the programme, have been ordered not to use the BBC name or logo in any of its promotional material. Camelot had to scrap a series of newspaper interviews with the show's presenters, Anthea Turner and Patrick Kielty, after the BBC demanded that it retain "complete control" over all aspects of the programme.

Original publicity material sent to newsgroups to help sell the TV Dreams scratchcard

did use the name of the BBC. Executives closely involved with the programme said that the decision to ban the use of the BBC name had come "from the most senior levels" after fears that the corporation was facing a public relations disaster.

The BBC is so worried about the possible backlash against the Big Ticket Show that an edict went out that under no circumstances could their name be used even though it is a BBC programme, one source said.

"They know they are stretching their charter to the limit. The whole point of the programme is that you have to buy a scratchcard to have a chance to be a contestant. For the BBC to then stick their heads in the sand and pretend that the scratchcard is nothing to do with them is ridiculous."

Original promotional material for the scratchcard sent out to newsgroups used the BBC name prominently. Notices on cash registers and

"how to play the game" leaflets all had the corporation stamp of approval. But promotional material now being sent out contains no suggestion that it is a BBC programme. Phrases such as "television game" and "TV's hottest new show" are used instead.

A huge advertising campaign on television and on billboards makes no mention of the BBC.

"It is completely hypocritical," said Gerald Kaufman, the Labour chairman of

the culture select committee of the House of Commons, who will raise the issue in Parliament this week. He added: "The BBC is promoting the sale of a commercial product, and more than that is paying to make the programme which does it. It has not stretched the limits of the charter, it has completely broken them."

The BBC's Producer Guidelines, a set of rules drawn up to put the charter into practice, warns against competitions which "risk being inter-

preted as gambling or a lottery". It says that the Lotteries and Amusements Act of 1976 may be contravened if "a viewer competition is based on a game of chance and some sort of donation, purchase or contribution is made to enter". The BBC argues that buying a scratchcard is not a BBC competition and so the rules do not apply. The guidelines also demand that the BBC should "normally pay for the prizes they turn to page 3, column 1

Inquiry call on Maze death

John Mullin
Ireland Correspondent

THE Maze prison in Northern Ireland was at the centre of another major security lapse yesterday after a former soldier, charged with murdering Philip Allen and Damien Trainor at Poyntzpass, Co. Armagh, 13 days ago, was found hanging in his cell.

Police announced an immediate investigation after prison officers on their early morning checks discovered David Keys, 26, an ex-member of the Royal Irish Regiment, dead in his cell. He was one of four men, all former soldiers, charged with the killings.

It appeared that Keys had killed himself during the night. He had not been judged a suicide risk, and detectives will be required to rule out any involvement of other inmates.

Keys was remanded in H-Block 6, which houses about 26 convicted prisoners from the Loyalist Volunteer Force. He had his own cell, but there is free association. Cells remain unlocked 24 hours a day, and staff rarely make checks at night.

His death is the latest in a series of blunders at the Maze. A hard-hitting report on the escape of IRA double-murderer, Liam Averil, and the killing of LVF Billy Wright will be published this month. Martin Mogg, the governor, has resigned.

Martin Narey, director of prison regimes in England and Wales, headed the investigation, whose results are already with Mo Mowlam, Northern Ireland Secretary. Sir David Ramotham, chief inspector of prisons in England and Wales, arrives next Monday to begin a separate inquiry into the Maze regime.

Mr Robinson said: "The Secretary of State must stop sitting on the lid and allow a proper inquiry." Ian Paisley

Junior, DUP justice spokesman, called for an end to the policy of mixing convicted and remand prisoners. He said: "This incident makes you wonder what we might expect next."

Keys, first of the four accused to be arrested, is said to have been involved in drugs dealing. He was shot two years ago by the Ulster Defence Association, and shortly afterwards left his home in Cragh, East Belfast, to move to Ballykeel, Co. Down.

He made no comment during a five-minute appearance before magistrate Rosie Watterson in Newry, Co. Down, last Wednesday. But RUC Chief Inspector Kenneth McFarland told the court that when he was charged for the Poyntzpass killings, Keys had replied: "Definitely not guilty."

Two masked loyalists burst into the Railway Bar on March 3. They shot Mr Allen, 36, and Mr Trainor, 25, first because they were closest to the door. Two other men were injured, and the pub's 67-year-old landlady, Bernie Cavanagh, escaped only by throwing herself behind the bar, and crawling out of a rear door.

The others accused of the killings are Ryan Robley, 28, Stephen McLean, 28, and Noel McCready, 31. All are former members of the Ulster Defence Association, which succeeded by the RUC. McLean and McCready were discharged early, but Robley is understood to have completed his service.

Keys and Robley were charged on Tuesday and appeared at Newry magistrates court last Wednesday. McLean and McCready were charged later that day, and were brought before Banbridge magistrates last Thursday.

The defendants, also accused of possessing weapons and ammunition with intent to endanger life, denied the charges. They were remanded to the Maze until March 25, and opted to go in to the LVF's block. No organisation has claimed responsibility for the Poyntzpass attack.

Gordon and Sarah: a Budget-conscious love story, part two



IT'S that man again. And with his girlfriend, too, relaxing like a regular guy at a birthday party for a friend's son. The day before, he went to a football match, writes Rory Carroll.

He was photographed there, too, looking regular. Yesterday we learned he got a new kitchen for his house in Edinburgh. It's lovely, apparently. Which means it's that

time of year, when Budget Day looms and Chancellor Gordon Brown flashes loving blokeishness for photo opportunities. The message: he's nice. If you're targeted tomorrow, it must be good for you. Unlike as it seems, that woolly jumper must have been chosen with an eye to the camera. It would be impolite to say the same thing about Sarah Macaulay, 34, his girlfriend.

They were together in the kitchen of Sne Nye, Mr Brown's political secretary, to celebrate the third birthday of her son, Ben. Mr Brown handed out party food and sang Happy Birthday before returning to the Treasury to work on his speech.

The public first glimpsed Ms Macaulay last summer, again just before the Bud-

get, when the News of the World, allegedly tipped off by Mr Brown's spin doctors, snapped them sharing a romantic dinner. The newspaper, via a waiter, revealed that Mr Brown was a "lovely man" who left big tips.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM BUTLER

Museums guarantee, page 2; Larry Elliott, page 11; Ed Balls profile, G2 pages 4, 5

Clinton crisis over TV sex claim

Martin Kettle in Washington

THE woman at the centre of the latest wave of sexual harassment allegations against Bill Clinton broke her media silence yesterday as the White House faced its worst crisis since the Monica Lewinsky affair broke nearly two months ago.

Kathleen Willey gave a television interview last night in which she spoke publicly for the first time about an alleged 1993 incident in which Mr Clinton is said to have fondled her against her will in the White House. "I could not believe the recklessness of that act," Ms Willey, aged 55, said on CBS's 60 Minutes programme.

Newsweek magazine today claimed that a prominent Democratic fundraiser, Nathan Landow, had down Ms Willey by private jet to his es-



Kathleen Willey: Alleged 'reckless' Clinton groped her

charges of obstruction of justice and perjury which have dogged Mr Clinton throughout the Lewinsky affair.

The Willey incident was seen as a new threat to Mr Clinton in the Paula Jones case, where it has been cited as proof of a pattern of sexual harassment of the type alleged by Ms Jones, and as further evidence of White House smear tactics and attempted cover-up similar to those which the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, is investigating in the Lewinsky case.

In her deposition, taken in January, Ms Willey said that she went to see Mr Clinton on November 29, 1993, when she was working as a White House volunteer and seeking a paid job because of financial problems. Unbeknown to her, her husband committed suicide the same day. She said that Mr Clinton hugged her in a way that was "more than

just a platonic hug", that he kissed her, that he put his hands on her breasts, that he put her hands on his aroused genitals and that he said "he had wanted to do that for a long time". She testified that she resisted Mr Clinton's advances and left. On a separate occasion in December 1993 Ms Willey said that Mr Clinton promised to help her get a job.

In his own deposition to Ms Jones's lawyers on January 17 Mr Clinton denied Ms Willey's claims. He said: "When she came to see me she was clearly upset. I did to her what I have done to scores and scores of men and women who have worked for me or been my friends over the years. I embraced her. I put my arms around her. I may even have kissed her on the forehead. There was nothing sexual about it. I was trying to help her calm down and trying to reassure her."

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Mr Robinson said: "The Secretary of State must stop sitting on the lid and allow a proper inquiry." Ian Paisley

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Finance

Predictions for Gordon Brown's first budget suggest that the chancellor is being more cautious than government coffers might allow.

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Life at the top of the world's most powerful men's football club, Manchester United, is a far cry from the West Indies with 64 runs, his highest score of the tour.

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770261 307316

US and Britain fear Gadhafi is currying favour with Africa to get UN sanctions lifted □ 'Dirty tricks' include weapons deal and cheap oil

Libya 'buying friends' on Lockerbie

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

ALARM bells are ringing in the United States and Britain at Libya's increasingly successful attempts to undermine United Nations sanctions imposed over the Lockerbie bombing.

In place. An open debate on the sanctions is due on Friday at the Security Council; there are expected to be calls for the measures to be lifted.

Sources at UN headquarters in New York say Libya has held secret talks with Gambia, which holds the rotating presidency of the 15-member council, about paying off its debt to the organisation.

Sanctions on aviation links, arms and diplomatic representation were renewed last week but only after the Gambian ambassador, Abdoulaye

Momodou Sallah, convened Friday's debate.

Mr Sallah is said to be "very close" to the Libyans and was instrumental in steering the discussion along lines favourable to Tripoli.

"There's a lot going on in this relationship and a lot of money involved," one US official said. "The Libyans like to buy a friend on the council."

Libya has been under sanctions since 1992 after it refused to hand over to the US or Scottish authorities two men accused of bombing Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie

in December 1988, killing 270 people. Both countries insist they will not bow to demands for a trial in a neutral venue or a third country.

But with wide support internationally and among the families of the British victims for a compromise over the venue of the trial, concern is mounting that the perpetrators may never be brought to justice.

New revelations about recent Libyan activities in Africa include reports that it supplied arms, including anti-aircraft guns, to anti-gov-

ernment rebels in Sierra Leone and undermined Nigerian-led peace enforcement efforts.

□ Directly refused a request by the Nigerian foreign minister, Tony Kiki, to halt support for the Freetown junta.

□ Bought off the Democratic Republic of Congo by selling it 300,000 tons of cheap oil. Other African countries have been promised concessionary terms if they provide open diplomatic support to Libya at the UN.

"The Libyans have been conducting a major PR campaign focused on those countries that can get the sanctions lifted, and they've been using their oil money and influence to get others to vote on their behalf," said one well-placed source.

"But you can't keep these deals quiet. The Libyans use other countries and then work against them. No one can afford to have friends like that."

London and Washington are playing down the significance of Friday's debate. "It's political theatre and will change nothing," said one British diplomat. "The Libyans still have

to obey the resolution and hand the suspects over."

But the nightmare scenario is that the US, Britain and France — which is pursuing Libya separately over the bombing of a TWA airliner over Chad — will become so isolated that they have to use their veto to maintain the sanctions.

UN sources say they are not surprised at allegations of Libyan dirty tricks but insist that African and Arab support for Tripoli is largely genuine.

"I wouldn't assume that just because someone is doing something the British and Americans don't like means they've been bribed," said one. "Libya has been making progress since September when Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, faced speaker after speaker at a general assembly debate attacking the sanctions and expressing support for a trial in a third country."

Later President Nelson Mandela of South Africa lent his moral authority to Libya by visiting Col Gadhafi before and after the Commonwealth summit in Edinburgh.

Libya has been making progress since September when Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, faced speaker after speaker at a general assembly debate attacking the sanctions and expressing support for a trial in a third country.

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Vigil for Stephen Lawrence



Mourners remembering Stephen Lawrence last night at the spot in Eltham, south-east London, where the teenager was murdered in a race attack in 1993. Churchmen and relatives were among the 300 people present on the eve of today's opening of a public inquiry into the killing, for which no one has been convicted

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOODWIN

Public funding for chief whip's libel case queried

Redwood attacks 'suppression of information' over action

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

CONSERVATIVES are to demand an explanation in Parliament on why the taxpayer is paying for the Labour Chief Whip, Nick Brown, to fight a libel action after he accused a company of being a front organisation for war criminals breaking United Nations sanctions against Serbia.

Mr Brown is being sued by a Yugoslav, Zoran Tancic, after he accused Metta Trading, a company which has been accused of sanction-busting in a letter to Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. The company buys and sells metals, ores, concentrates and metal products.

His accusation was made as part of his letter of complaint against Bob Wareing, the Labour backbencher sus-

pended from Parliament last year.

Mr Brown acted as Chief Whip as part of his job in upholding party discipline — which is not a Government matter. But he is receiving taxpayer's help in his other role as Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Treasury. This means the taxpayer is funding party political business — since the Chief Whip is a party post, not a Government appointment.

Sir Richard Wilson, the Cabinet Secretary, has blocked the Guardian from access to papers which authorised spending by the Treasury Solicitor's department to defend the action.

Last night John Redwood, shadow trade and industry spokesman, said: "Members of the Opposition will be raising this in Parliament and seeking an explanation."

He added: "It is quite wrong

to use a code to deliberately suppress information on why public money is being spent to defend ministers."

A letter from the ministry's director of information, Barry Sutcliffe, to the Guardian said: "The Chief Whip became involved as a government minister in pursuit of the Government's objective to

uphold the highest standards of honesty and propriety in public life. I am unable to supply further information."

The Cabinet Office has also disclosed that it plans to use the Government's proposed Freedom of Information Act to ban journalists from obtaining information on how much taxpayers' money is

spent defending ministers in future legal cases.

This means the act will be used by Tony Blair to restrict information such as John Major published under the previous administration. Mr Major authorised all fees met by the taxpayer in defending ministers to be published. This followed the row over the former Tory chancellor, Norman Lamont, using public money to defend himself over evocation of a sex therapist from his London home.

In his letter to Sir Gordon, Mr Brown wrote: "The company was covered by a UN sanctions order and was believed to be a front organisation for the Bosnian Serb regime, whose leading members were wanted ... as war criminals."

He complained that Mr Wareing, the MP for Liverpool West Derby, had not declared his shareholding in Metta Trading, for which he was a consultant, in the Register of Members' Interests. Zoran Tancic is a director of the company.

Sir Gordon upheld the complaint, which led to Mr Wareing being suspended from Parliament for seven days.

But he concluded: "By the time Mr Wareing became associated with Metta Trading, the Department of Trade and Industry had already accepted the control was no longer exercised by a person connected with Serbia and Montenegro for the purpose of UN sanctions."

He added: "I have seen no evidence to suggest that Metta Trading Inc was a front organisation for the Bosnian Serbs."

As a result, Mr Tancic, the one Yugoslav director of the company, sent a solicitor's letter from Peter Carter Ruck to the Chief Whip, demanding a public apology, backed by the threat of court action. Mr Brown refused to apologise and instead sought government help to fight the action, using taxpayer's money.

The then Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robin (now Lord) Butler, authorised the Treasury Solicitor to act for him.



Chief Whip Nick Brown (left) and questioner John Redwood

Ashdown lambasts cuts

Anne Perkins
Political Correspondent

PADDY Ashdown yesterday launched his fiercest attack yet on the Labour government by accusing it of backtracking on election promises by making cuts instead of spending vital money on education.

In a speech which will infuriate ministers, Mr Ashdown told his party faithful at the end of their spring conference in Southport: "It just will not do to promise education, education, education — but then start with cuts, cuts and cuts."

Mr Ashdown, in an eve-of-Budget assault on Labour's spending priorities, challenged Gordon Brown to deliver a real Budget for jobs by investing in education. "It's the investment ministers are still refusing to make, despite all their promises. And if they

don't make that investment in the Budget, we will carry them every day of this parliament until they do."

At the end of the three-day conference in Southport, aimed at silencing party critics of the policy of "constructive opposition", Mr Ashdown claimed the New Deal for the long-term unemployed did not address the real issue. "It is not going to do much to create long-term jobs. Indeed, it may actually displace some real jobs with purely temporary ones."

The Lib Dem leader, who was on a Community Programme as a Somerset youth officer when he was first elected in 1983, claimed there could be as many as 4 million people who would like to work.

A society, which says that work is the source of dignity and self-respect, threatens itself if it then consigns such a high proportion of its citizens

and especially its young to rot in unemployment," he said.

On Saturday, Lib Dems reinstated their commitment to raising income tax by a penny in the pound to meet education's needs. The attack brought a swift response from the education minister, Stephen Byers, who said Mr Ashdown was "deceiving himself and the country" by deeming that the Government was putting £1.3 billion into school repairs and an extra £165 million into universities.

On Europe, where Lib Dems believe the mood is changing fast, Mr Ashdown challenged Mr Blair to set a target date for entry into a single currency and set a referendum before the next election.

"I despair at the Government's timidity on this. 'Wait and see' under the last government has been replaced by 'Waiting for Rupert Murdoch' under this one."

A bit of Gypsy in her soul

Review

Lyn Gardner

Mother Courage And Her Children
Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh

BRECHT apparently once made the throwaway suggestion that Mae West or Edith Piaf might make the ideal Mother Courage. For a moment at the beginning of this production, you wonder whether the director, Kenny Ireland, has taken him at his word.

Maggie Steed's Mother Courage looms out of the mist on her canteen wagon smiling fondly at her offspring, to the accompaniment of music by Jonathan Dove that is so catchy you want to tap your feet. Mother Courage, trudging across the battlefields of

the Thirty Years War, making a business out of carnage, was, of course, a bit of a gypsy. The effect here, though, is more Gypsy.

David Hare's combative, slyly cynical translation twitches with smart one-liners and colloquialisms. It makes Brecht seem entertaining, not just preachy.

The worth of this translation was proved last month in Manchester, when Contact Theatre used it very successfully in a traditional Brechtian production.

Ireland, however, favours the example set by Jonathan Kent at the National in 1996, and opts for epic storytelling rather than alienation effects. His production has several advantages over Kent's. For a start, he sets the play within its seventeenth century context and lets the audience make any modern parallels they desire. Secondly, the Lyceum is big enough, but not

so grand a space that it encourages the overblown.

Ireland is exceptionally well served by his designer, Dermot Hayes, who provides a backcloth and floor covering that is a densely printed map of Europe.

But most of all, he has an actress who is a natural for the role of Courage. Gruff, hard-boiled, with an earthy sexiness and a scathing wit, Steed's Mother Courage is a small businesswoman with a crafty on-the-make chipiness.

At the end, standing over the body of her daughter, she suddenly sags like scarecrow that has lost all its stuffing. Then it's back to business and off with her cart, forever the great survivor but with nothing worth living for. There is a defiant in the sweat on her brow. The triumph of Steed's performance is that we can despise and pity her, all at the same time.

Brown to guarantee free entry to museums

Dan Gheister
Arts Correspondent

THE Chancellor, Gordon Brown, is expected to make good one of Labour's pre-election promises by announcing an £80 million package to ensure free admission to national museums and galleries in tomorrow's Budget.

The move, which comes after months of conflicting signals from the Treasury and the Department of Culture, will mean the scrapping of charges to the Science Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. It also means that the Tate Gallery, the National Gallery and the British Museum will be able to avoid charging.

Museum sources calculate that the cost of removing charges where they already exist will be £40 million, while it will cost another £40 million to stave off the introduction of charges. The money is likely to come either from the National Lottery or from an increase in the cash that museums receive from government.

Introduction of charges, which at first were voluntary at many institutions, have led to a decline in attendances. Before the election, Labour seemed to recognise this phenomenon, with Tony Blair saying: "We are concerned about the introduction of admission charges at national museums. The evidence suggests that high charges have brought a big decline in attendance."

But after the election Labour appeared to go lukewarm on abolishing charges. The Department of Culture announced a review into access, which emphasised the benefits of touring, school visits and season tickets, but not of removing charges. The Museums and Galleries Commission issued research into the issue, emphasising the fact that charges did not deter the public from visiting museums. The fact that the question was asked of people who did not normally visit museums was played down.

The surprise announcement

ment expected tomorrow shows that the political as well as the presentational argument has been won by the Department of Culture.

While the Treasury was hostile to the idea of further subsidising museums, some of which have been criticised for their lack of financial rigour, the Department of Culture appears to have succeeded in making a case for a wide interpretation of culture and education. Opponents of charging argue that it is impossible to put a price on the educational value of free access to museums.

In presentational terms, the Government will have seen the advantages to be had in committing a relatively small sum to museum charging. The move should appease

The Treasury was hostile, but culture department seems to have prevailed

Labour's critics in the arts.

Admission charges are currently levied at the Victoria and Albert Museum (£5), the Imperial War Museum (£4.70), the Science Museum (£2.50), the Natural History Museum (£6) and the National Maritime Museum (£5). The national museums which have resisted introducing charges are the British Museum, the Tate Gallery, the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery.

But even these museums have been drawing up contingency plans to introduce charges. The British Museum has looked at breaking its 250-year tradition of free access by charging 25 pence to each of its six million visitors.

Figures for the Science Museum show that visitor numbers have dropped dramatically since the introduction of charges. In 1987/88, the last year before entry charges were introduced, 3.2 million people visited. That figure immediately fell to 1.1 million though it has recovered to 1.5 million in 1996/7.

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Children play in Grimethorpe, a mining village whose plight was depicted in the film *Brassed Off*. The county has 1,000 miners, down from 30,000 a decade ago. PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE FORREST

Good cause to be brassed off

Bad points: organised crime, traffic (especially a combination of the two)

Blunkett back-pedals over fees


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Office harassment rife, says survey

Chauvinist bosses are sex pests

Amelia Gentleman

MANY secretaries are the victims of high levels of sexual harassment, according to a Guardian survey. Some 15 per cent of secretaries who responded said they had been propositioned by their bosses, who had asked them to have sex or to perform a sexual act.

The findings suggest that attitudes in the workplace have changed little since the 1950s. The replies of 3,850, mainly female, secretaries indicate a deeply sexist office environment where stereotypical chauvinist employers appear unaware of the hazards of sexual discrimination. Harassment of secretaries appears to be matched by an absence of respect for their position. Many employers expect them to perform menial tasks in addition to their official duties.

More than half said they were expected to make their boss coffee and to buy his lunch.

A further 18 per cent said they had been asked to buy presents on their boss's behalf for wives, mistresses and children, while 31 per cent said they were expected to remind them of birthdays and

'The ghastly thing is that men still feel they can abuse their position, their power, for sexual gain'

Kate Figes, author of *Because of Her Sex*

anniversaries. Another 14 per cent said their employers had given them clothes to mend as part of their everyday tasks.

Frank Spencer, the Equal Opportunities Commission's acting Chief Executive, said the findings reflected the large number of complaints it received about sexual harassment.

"This kind of treatment of secretaries is absolutely unacceptable. It is symptomatic of a very old-fashioned and



unequal relationship between the boss and the subordinate. We need to see a radical change of culture in office life."

Secretaries also needed to be properly financially rewarded if they were to get the respect that they deserved, he added.

Kate Figes, author of *Because of Her Sex*, a study of feminist theory, said: "The stereotypical relationship of the subservient secretary and

her boss doesn't seem to have changed much. The ghastly thing about this is that men still feel they can abuse their position, using their power for sexual gain."

Among the more outrageous demands of employers was a request for details of one secretary's menstrual cycle so that her boss could "give her a wide birth". Another had to ensure that the boss's tea was exactly the same colour as the envelope taped to his desk. A third was asked to set up a post office box so that her employer's mistress could write to him.

Freda Gardiner, chairwoman of the Secretarial Development Network, said: "Because secretaries and bosses spend so much time together sometimes the close nature of their relationship can be misinterpreted."

"It is important to lay down guidelines at the start. If you make your position clear the very first time you feel that unwelcome advances are being made, it is easier to nip the process in the bud."

"But should your boss's behaviour persist, it is vital to keep a diary and make a note of every instance of potential harassment, so that the evidence is all there, should you want to take the matter further."

'It would have been easier if he had pinched my bum'

WHEN Nicola Hayes's boss asked her to come for a skinny dip in his private swimming pool she decided it was time to put a stop to a long-running saga of sexual harassment, writes Amelia Gentleman.

The behaviour of her employer, the owner of a South London firm, was especially unnerving because it began in a very subtle fashion and only slowly became threatening. "It would have been easier to handle if he had pinched my bum straight out — but it wasn't so blatant as that. To begin with I thought I was just imagining things," Ms Hayes said.

"My boss used to ring me up a few times a day just to ask me how I was. It didn't amount to much, but I already felt it was telephone harassment. "When his wife — who worked with us — went away for a while, it became more difficult. He began to

brush past me in the office in a way that was hard to ignore. He used to stand too close to me, touching my hair and invading my personal space, and he started making suggestive comments. I tried to make a joke out of it, although it made me very uncomfortable.

"On a Saturday, he invited me to dinner, saying it was a reward for my good work. He suggested he would make it worth my while if I came — that there wouldn't be any money in my pay cheque. Then he told me he had been fantasising about swimming naked with me.

"The whole affair was very degrading — it was like a non-physical rape. It made me feel very vulnerable; I was frightened that I might find myself alone in a room with him.

"I was always aware that he was my boss and that I didn't want to lose my job. I told a senior colleague, but he said he couldn't help me because he was worried about getting the sack too. In the end I couldn't bear any more so I walked out," she said.

Ms Hayes won her case of sexual harassment at an industrial tribunal.

Christian sect takes over Tory branch

Tory Carroll

A CHRISTIAN sect run by an insurance salesman, who believes the soap opera *EastEnders* is evil, has taken over a Conservative constituency association.

More than 100 members of the fundamentalist Pentecostal Church joined the Tory Party branch in the constituency of Brentwood and Ongar, Essex, and voted themselves on to key positions. Disaffected Tories accuse the party of accepting the takeover in exchange for contributions.

Two church members will stand as Conservative candidates in May's borough council election, and another 600 are expected to apply to join the constituency association, giving them almost half the votes and a potentially decisive role in selecting the parliamentary candidate. Their leader is Bishop Michael Reid, a former policeman who claims to perform faith-healing miracles.

In January, 119 followers joined the Party's Hatch constituency branch, which had just 16 Tories. At last week's AGM they doubled the usual attendance of 130 and succeeded in appointing a church member, Rob Clemenson, as vice-chairman.

Tony Donnelly, the association's former treasurer, said the church had donated more than £20,000 since January. Heavily defeated for the chairmanship on an anti-Pentecostal platform, he predicted the church would wield growing influence.

"This is quite frightening and disturbing. Local Tories are extremely concerned that they'll use the party as a vehicle for their views. There's nothing to stop them."

"Bishop Reid says they're joining independently of the church, but if that's the case then there's a real miracle."

The local MP, Eric Pickles, said the new members were welcome. "I'm not religious



Michael Reid: sect's leader and a former policeman

but they seem wonderfully normal. In any case, the Conservative Party can't turn people away because of their religion or colour or whatever."

His constituency agent, Andrew Varney, said a disaffected rump of party members had deliberately planted the story in the media.

Bishop Reid, who founded the Pentecostal Church in Brentwood 22 years ago, espouses deeply conservative views. Pentecost means face of God in Hebrew.

Trumpet Call, his quarterly newsletter, condemns soap operas as evil and perverted, advocates corporal punishment, accuses the BBC of encouraging "abnormal" homosexuality and brands the Church of England "an obscure sect hell-bent on a liberal agenda". Trumpet Call has a print run of 100,000 and is sent to all MPs.

A website claims miracles are a regular occurrence at the church. The Advertising Standards Authority upheld a complaint against a claim on behalf of a visiting guest speaker, Archbishop Dr Benson of Idahosa, who was said to have raised eight people from the dead.

Repeated efforts to contact Bishop Reid, aged 57, failed yesterday.



Scene and herd... Opera goes at Glyndebourne, East Sussex, refresh themselves in traditional style during the interval

PHOTOGRAPH: GUY GRAY

Villagers raise angry voices in battle to silence opera festival

Jamie Wilson on trouble in paradise

IT AIMS to rival Glyndebourne and Garsington in the summer opera festival stakes, but Northampton Hall, deep in the heart of rural Hampshire, has provoked a furious row involving local residents, English Heritage, and warring factions within the Baring family, whose family bank was brought down by the rogue trader Nick Leeson.

"This year sees the awakening of Hampshire's sleeping beauty. In July, Grange Park Opera will breathe life and

music into the house and landscape which have lain silent for 70 years," reads the publicity material.

A lavish brochure has been produced; tickets for this summer's performances are selling out fast; the performers have been booked and builders are waiting to convert the house, described as one of Europe's neo-classical jewels, into a venue fit for opera. There is, however, one problem. Planning permission, which the company

thought would be a formality, is being vehemently opposed by residents.

The last thing the villagers of Northampton want is somebody breathing new life into the area, or disturbing the peace and tranquillity. They have accused the company of hoodwinking the public into buying tickets before the event has been granted planning permission or a licence, a charge vehemently denied by the opera.

"It is quite usual to start taking bookings before permission has been granted. None of the money for the tickets has been cashed and if by any chance the opera does not go ahead all the money will be repaid in full," a spokesman said.

The opera has caused a feud within the Baring clan. Lord Ashburton — otherwise known as John Baring, the patron of the festival — owns the freehold of the land around the hall. His brother Robin Baring lives on the estate, and in an unfraternal gesture wrote a letter to Winchester planning department voicing his opposition to the scheme. Mark Loughton, a cousin of Lord Ashburton,

The country houses

Glyndebourne (East Sussex)
Capacity: 1,200
Prices: £10-£118
First production: The Marriage of Figaro, 1934
The first and the grandest of the "country house" operas, it was founded by John Christie and Audrey Mild-May in 1934.

Garsington (Oxford)
Capacity: 400
Prices: £50-£95
First production: The Marriage of Figaro, 1989
Set up by Leonard Ingrams, brother of former Private Eye editor, Richard, it has repeatedly upset the council and residents for "noise pollution". Mr Ingrams survived a second prosecution last year.

has even offered to give English Heritage, owners of the Grange, £35,000 a year to pay for its upkeep to stop the festival.

Matters came to a head during a lively planning meeting in Northampton village hall last week. At the front sat the

Northampton (Hampshire)
Capacity: 370
Prices: £10-£95
First production: The Marriage of Figaro, 1988

Residents are up in arms about disruption it may bring to the area. The opera company has started selling tickets despite the fact that planning permission has not been granted yet.

Longborough (Gloucestershire)
Capacity: 400 (plus boxes)
Prices: £30 (average)
First production: Carmen, 1987
The Council for the Protection of Rural England has objected to the opera, and Cotswold district council wants the Palladian facade demolished.

council planners, with chairman Rodney Sabine acting as conductor for the evening. Facing them were the lead roles in the piece — the opera company and its advisers including Lord Ashburton, and a representative of English Heritage. Villagers formed a

rumbling, discontented chorus at the back.

At Northampton much of the local people's wrath has been directed at the festival's driving force, Wasfi Kani, a former chief executive of Garsington, the country house opera near Oxford run by Leonard Ingrams.

Kani has also had his fair share of run-ins with residents — Mr Ingrams has been forced to defend two charges of noise pollution caused by sopranos.

Ms Kani has been blamed by the locals for the underhand way in which they perceive the festival has been organised. According to the villagers the first anybody knew about the proposal was in early January by which time the company had already produced a lavish brochure (distributed in London but not in Northampton) and begun selling tickets.

The opera does have some supporters within the community. "It's absolutely fantastic," said Peter Skeggs, a retired local doctor. "I bought my tickets on a Monday and it was sold out the next day. Absolutely marvellous. There is a terrible dearth of opera in Hampshire."

Island murder hunt intensifies

Helena Smith in Athens

THE search for the killers of a retired British couple on the Greek island of Cephalonia intensified yesterday despite the detention of two Albanian "bandits" in connection with the crime.

Roy and Judith Eccles were stabbed to death while they slept in their villa on Cephalonia, the island Louis de Bernières brought to life with his celebrated novel, *Captain Corcoran's Mandolin*.

Yesterday, Brionis living in the mountain village where the 55-year-old electrical engineer and his 49-year-old wife had chosen to start a second life said they were haunted by the memory of the crime. "We're sleeping with a knife under the pillow," said Dickie Dawes.

Another neighbour, recalling the bloody dénouement of Captain Corcoran's Mandolin — a book that has inspired thousands of Britons to visit Cephalonia — said the entire village (population 600) had plunged into mourning.

"There hasn't been a murder on Cephalonia since the second world war," said

Spyros Rouhatis, the septuagenarian proprietor of the Faliron cafe.

The bodies of the Bedford couple arrived over the weekend in Athens, where an autopsy was conducted, before being flown back to Britain.

A welter of conspiracy theories have surfaced since the bodies were found in a pool of blood last Friday. But police said they were working on the premise that Albanian bandits were responsible.

"We are concentrating on Albanians because the way the crime was committed was very Oriental," said Dimitrios Christoforatos, the detective in charge. "We are coming round to the conclusion that this was a bungled robbery."

Since thousands of desperate Albanian migrants have poured into Greece, they have been blamed for an unprecedented wave of crime.

The major said the two "imprisoned" 25-year-old Albanians held had been picked up on the adjacent island of Lefkada and were who had plunged into mourning. They will remain in custody awaiting the results of tests on clothing and blood samples.

Tory MP who admits he used drugs urges inquiry



David Prior: 'You can wear a suit and still roll a joint'

Anna Perkins
Political Correspondent

A BACKBENCHER yesterday became the first Conservative to admit using illegal drugs after a survey of new MPs revealed that more than one in five had tried drugs.

David Prior, MP for Norfolk North and son of the former Tory Northern Ireland minister, Lord Prior, said: "It's done me no harm" as he joined calls for a royal commission on the legalisation of cannabis.

But Jack Straw, the Home

Secretary, speaking on BBC radio, repeated his opposition to it. "Governments set up royal commissions when they are uncertain about this. I have seen no good reason for de-criminalisation and plenty against it. If you decriminalised these drugs there would be a massive increase in consumption."

Mr Prior, who is 43 and worked for British Steel for 20 years, was the only one of the MPs who took part in the survey prepared to speak openly about taking drugs. He said: "I'd be very surprised if the

Government didn't change its mind. There is clearly a problem... I took soft drugs for a few years in my early 20s and then grew out of it. But I just don't know enough about the effects of legalisation."

Writing in yesterday's Independent on Sunday, which is campaigning for the legalisation of cannabis, he said: "I associate my experience with drugs (soft ones) not with Mick Jagger or Aldous Huxley but with passing my law degree and working in a bank. You can wear a pin-stripe suit and be utterly conventional and still roll a joint. And yes, I did inhale."

The survey of new MPs, done for IWT's Jonathan Dimbleby programme, showed that almost two-thirds supported the call for a royal commission. Peter Brand, the Liberal Democrat MP for the Isle of Wight, said: "We are treating cannabis as the Band of Hope did alcohol — with a little success."

Two Labour backbenchers, Brentford MP Nick Palmer and Bolton South East's Brian Iddon, both backed the call. Opinions on the state of the law were balanced, with a small majority thinking it was too harsh. Although two-thirds said friends and asso-

ciates had used illegal drugs, only 22 per cent of the new MPs admitted that they themselves had.

MPs were critical of the way cannabis laws were applied. One said: "Most police forces give cautions for possession of small amounts of cannabis for personal use. What about the people who live in areas with less enlightened police forces?"

Another said: "It's time for a little more consistency in the way we treat this kind of issue."

A total of 81 new MPs took part in the survey, a third of the number approached.

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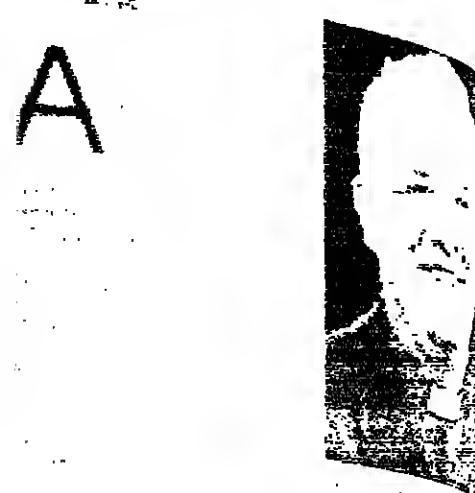
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Broadcasting diffuses dialect

Regional riches put one over on standard English, like

Martin Wainwright

BITAIN'S rich linguistic world of broddies, noppits and lopsy-turvy grammar what starts unexpected, like, is about to celebrate its final victory over Standard English and Received Pronunciation.

An international dialect conference this month will hear that not only have thousands of localised words colonised the country, but that new dialects are springing up, including a form unique to Milton Keynes.

Academics have found that the triumph of regional accents, which has led to the concentration of telephone banking and tourism in "friendly-voiced" Northern England, has been mirrored by a revival in dialect pronunciation and grammar.

The Northern initiative without a possessive "s", which offers a solution to the national apostrophe dilemma, is spreading and previously

Watching our language

Yorkshire broddit: to pick at something with a pointed instrument
noppit: a simoleon

South West **lappleturva**: somersault
stepmother: a scolding
bishopeck: a pan left on the cooker so that its contents sizzle to the bottom

localised usages such as "See you later" for "Goodbye" are becoming general.

"Paradoxically, television and radio, which initially spread the use of standard English have played an important part in the process," said Katie Wales, a dialectician at Leeds University where the conference will mark the 50th anniversary of Britain's only comprehensive dialect survey.

"Through soaps and advertising in particular, broadcasters are exploiting regional variation for 'realism'. This encourages an awareness of the diversity of our English, if admittedly rather stereotypically."

The Liverpoolians of Brookside, Brummies of Ambridge and Geordies of Byker Grove have done more than popularise accents, according to Clive Upton, who is leading a new survey, based at Leeds and Sheffield universities.

The insult "toe rag" has broken out of its Cockney/Essex cradle thanks to its colourful use in Birds of a

telety: moulty (but at war with the US meaning of "gutsy")

North East **riccum**: a scrap
smittit: to infect with disease

Midlands **scraney**: thin
lennels: a thin blattering variant of scraney, closer to slender

Feather, while a novelty like "smeg" has become widespread through Red Dwarf. Teams of recorders have registered the survival of most of 40 ways of describing blushing recorded in the 1940s and '50s survey by Harold Orton, along with different meanings for the same word, depending on region.

"Awkward traditionally means clumsy in Somerset but stupid in Nottinghamshire," he said. "There appears to be a decline in extremely localised dialect — where you had people in neighbouring villages using different words or expressions — but a spread of the more common dialect words."

Derogatory words for schoolchildren, from nobhead to chinner, have multiplied. Well dug in terms such as the Yorkshire "spell" for splinter and "parky" for cold are typical of spreading usages, co-existing with the constant refreshment of the language from overseas — notably the United States — and new fields, such as the Internet.



Scouse talk... Ron, Mike and David from Brookside. Soap operas have exported dialects from their home areas

Misconduct claim against cardiologist who dilated artery against parents' wishes

Great Ormond Street consultant charged after death of girl, 6



Ross and Carolyn Jenkins, whose daughter Debbie was born with congenital heart defect and had two open-heart operations

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

A CONSULTANT from a leading children's hospital will appear before the General Medical Council tomorrow to face charges of serious professional misconduct for carrying out a procedure on a girl aged six without her parents' consent.

James Taylor, a paediatric cardiologist at the Great Ormond Street hospital in London, is accused of performing a balloon catheterisation on Debbie Jenkins to July 1995 to try to enlarge a narrowed artery, against her parents' wishes. The balloon burst, blocking the blood flow to the brain, and she died the following day.

Debbie, youngest of four children and the only girl, was born with a congenital heart defect and had had two open-heart operations. Her parents, Ross and Carolyn, of Sprowston, Norwich, noticed that she was tired and listless and grew breathless easily.

Dr Taylor could find nothing wrong, but a consultant at the Royal Brompton hospital in south-west London, where she was sent for a second opinion, thought there was a problem with her heart.

The Royal Brompton consultant told them there was no urgency, but her parents agreed she should have a diagnostic catheterisation at Great Ormond Street — a rou-



Debbie Jenkins

time investigative procedure in which a catheter is inserted through a blood vessel into the heart — and signed a consent form only for the diagnostic procedure.

Mrs Jenkins, who had run the parents' support group Heartline in East Anglia and was knowledgeable about cardiac procedures, specifically stated she did not want a balloon catheter used because she regarded it as risky. The procedure involves inflating a balloon to expand a narrowed coronary artery.

At the inquest into Debbie's death in 1996, Dr Taylor admitted doing the procedure without parental consent. He said he had no intention of using a balloon catheter until

'The whole thing has just wrecked us. Carolyn won't go out on her own at all. I still cry myself to sleep. Debs [left] is buried down the road, and I refuse to leave her'

he discovered that an artificial conduit inserted into Debbie's artery during her previous surgery had become deformed, causing a blockage in her blood flow, and he realised a balloon catheter could rectify the situation.

He said he had tried to contact Mrs Jenkins, who was at the hospital, but when he was unable to find her he went ahead with the procedure because Debbie's sedation was wearing off and time was limited.

The balloon burst, and attempts to retrieve it using another catheter failed. The remains of the balloon blocked the artery, cutting off blood to the brain. Eventually a surgery team was called in

to perform a bypass operation, but there was a further delay because the bypass machine had to be fetched from another floor. Debbie had already suffered irreversible brain damage and died the next day.

The St Pancras coroner, Stephen Chan, recorded a verdict of misadventure. He described Dr Taylor's actions as "erroneous and unwise" but said there was "not a shred of evidence of gross negligence".

He added: "I am satisfied he was acting conscientiously and carefully and was sincere in his belief that he was acting in the best interests of his patient." Nevertheless, "it is not difficult to understand the parents' sense of outrage and their feelings of betrayal".

In a rare step, the GMC is paying for the family's solicitor, Graham Peart, and barristers, Jeffrey Burke QC and Robert Sheehan, to present the case against the doctor. Normally, this is done by lawyers chosen by the GMC. A spokeswoman said the option was always on offer but rarely taken up.

Debbie's death has devastated the family, Mr Jenkins, a technical support engineer, insists on visiting his daughter's grave every day. He has missed a daily visit only three times in the two years and eight months since she died. He will not go on holiday or take a job that requires travelling. At the time of Debbie's death the family had sold their house and were about to move else-

where with the chance of a better-paid job for Mr Jenkins, but they pulled out of the sale. Their sons, aged between 12 and 19, have been undergoing counselling.

Mr Jenkins, aged 41, said: "The whole thing has just wrecked us. Carolyn won't go out on her own at all. I still cry myself to sleep. Debs is buried down the road and I refuse to leave her. Our families come from County Durham, and if we go there one day we have to come back the same day or the following day."

He dismisses the claim that his wife could not be found while Debbie was undergoing the procedure. "If we went off the ward we always told the nursing staff where we would be. Carolyn stayed on the ward except when she went for coffee or a cigarette. There were some people outside where parents sit when they have a cigarette."

Mr Peart said the family had been granted legal aid to sue the hospital. "Great Ormond Street's attitude all along has been very much 'we are so sorry Debbie died but we still think Dr Taylor was justified in doing what he did'. I think parents are owed more than that. Not only are you grieving for the death of your child, but this terrible wrong has happened."

Dr Taylor's solicitor, Allison Troake, said he was following legal advice not to comment.

Help in your ear for just £1 a minute

Ruaridh Nicoll on the UK's first commercial counselling telephone hotline

LOST your job? Family crisis? Pick up the phone and dial Counselling UK, and for £1 a minute your furrowed brow will be soothed.

The service, which starts today, will offer Britain's first general commercial counselling services by phone. A computerised hotline will direct calls to one of 44 counsellors around the country.

"The idea is to make counselling available instantly," said Pam Keeling, a director of Counselling UK. "Experience has shown us that too often people are faced with long waiting lists. By the time they get help it is frequently too late."

Ms Keeling, aged 47, and two friends, Irene Rodgers and Mandy Gottschalk, have set up the service because they believe there are "a lot of unhappy people" who are not receiving the help they want.

While Ms Keeling is an administrator, Ms Rodgers and Ms Gottschalk have 30 years' experience of counselling between them. All three used to work for Relate, one of Diana, Princess of Wales's favourite charities, but decided to start their own business.

"We believe that we will fill a gap in the available counselling services," said Ms Keeling. "All of our counsellors have recognised qualifications and are highly experienced." They have been carefully selected from a large number of applicants.

Other phone counselling services, which operate on a charitable basis, are much cheaper. Relate's number costs roughly 7p a minute. But most are over-subscribed.

Julia Cole, a spokeswoman for Relate, said that as long as the advice was good and people knew what they were paying she had no problem with the new service.

People calling Counselling UK tap their credit card number into a touch-tone telephone. They are told their calls will not be recorded or traced, except in the case of fraud, and that they will be discreetly billed by Global Interactive Systems, whose computer system will patch them through to counsellors.

Calls will be conducted on first name terms, and anyone wishing to talk to the same counsellor again will be given a special pin number to provide the link up. The lines are open from 6am to midnight.

Portillo seeks Tory party role

Anne Perkins
Political Correspondent

MICHAEL Portillo yesterday claimed he had been "misunderstood" in government and appealed for a role — any role — in the Tory leadership team.

The man whose defeat on May 1 became a symbol of the rejection of all the Conservative government stood for, appealed for his party to let him back in. "I do want to be part of the Hague team and I will do whatever I can."

But a senior Conservative Central Office source rejected the offer. "He and William Hague are in regular contact, and Mr Hague asks him for his thoughts on big speeches. There won't be anything more formal than that."

The former defence minister claimed he had been misunderstood. "I was not very good at explaining myself," he told Sir David Frost on BBC TV yesterday. "I managed to get into pigeonholes and into an image that I didn't recognise when I picked up the newspapers."

Mr Portillo has made a series of attempts to relaunch himself into political orbit. At the Tory party conference last October, he stunned former colleagues by declaring that the party was perceived as being "greedy, selfish, sleazy and lacking in compassion".

But Central Office appears to regard Mr Portillo's overtures with scepticism, suspicious that he still harbours leadership ambitions, and dreams of "doing a Hezzer" — building up support in the constituencies while being shunned by the leadership.

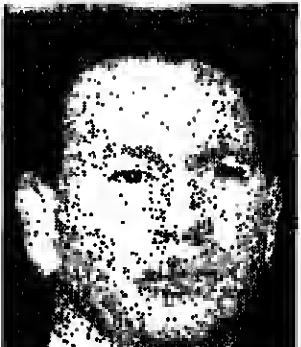
They have an ambiguous relationship with the man who is still one of their biggest crowd pullers. Reporters were instructed not to go on a Portillo speaking tour before Christmas. Another one in January was organised by Mr Portillo without Central Office help.

Mr Portillo, who has adopted a policy of being frank with interviewers, admitted he still wanted to be Prime Minister but thought that at 44 he was probably too old. William Hague is 36.

In a new policy shift, Mr Portillo suggested that he had softened some of his views on Europe. While he found it hard to foresee circumstances in which he could support a single currency, he admitted he could be wrong, and wished the project well.

"I very much respect the feeling that there is in much of continental Europe that building a political union, really building a single European state is the way that they feel we are going to avoid future wars. I don't agree with that, but I do respect that point of view."

Mr Portillo is to embark on a television series on the future of the Conservatives.



Michael Portillo: said he was 'misunderstood' in power

Missing surgeon's body found

Clare Longridge

THE body of a research surgeon was found washed up on a Cleveland beach 24 hours after he had escaped from police custody and ran into the sea.

Nicholas Ingledew, 28, from London, had suffered psychological problems. He was arrested on Friday after hitting a man and barricading himself in a small room.

A doctor had examined Mr Ingledew at Redcar police station, and he was being transferred to a hospital when he broke free and ran

to the sea. Police attempted to follow him, but lost him in the dark.

An air and sea search was mounted but there was no sign of him until his body was found on Redcar beach on Saturday night. A post-mortem revealed he had drowned.

Mr Ingledew was born and brought up in Teesside but moved to London to work as a research surgeon. He was said to be extremely intelligent but had suffered a series of psychological problems.

Cleveland Police confirmed its complaints and disciplinary committee would carry out an inquiry.

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6 WORLD NEWS

Vote of confidence for Jospin's government

French left takes
rightwing bastions

Paul Webster in Paris

LIONEL Jospin's Socialist-led government won a resounding vote of confidence in elections for the 22 French regions yesterday, with the conservative Gaullist-centrist coalition polling one of its worst scores countrywide.

Although more than a third of the 38 million voters abstained, early results showed several rightwing bastions would fall to leftwing parties. Among them was Aquitaine, based on Bordeaux, Languedoc-Roussillon on the Mediterranean, and Picardy in the north. The left won only two regions in the last vote six years ago and easily held them — rural Limousin and the industrial Nord-Pas-de-Calais.

Early estimates of the results showed government parties with more than 35 per cent and the opposition RPR-UDF with less than 31 per cent. The National Front scored an average 15 per cent and its councillors will arbitrate in several regions when the 1,829 regional members vote for their local chairman on March 20.

The voting was based on proportional representation. The most significant result was the poor showing of the opposition parties, which were in government until they were routed by the Socialist-Communist-Green coalition in the June general elections. Mid-term elections usually favour the opposition, but yesterday's polling confirmed Mr Jospin's personal popularity, and electoral approval for reforms such as the

35-hour working week and a 25 billion job creation programme.

During the campaign, the prime minister said a good result would enable him to speed up other reforms. With the government likely to take control of more than half the regions, given increased powers under Socialist decentralisation laws in 1986 — it will have more power to accelerate change in education, transport, economic development, tourism and culture.

Unemployed
stage protest

JOBLESS protesters and African illegal immigrants seized on France's regional elections yesterday to stage protests in support of their claims for jobs and residence permits.

The jobless said they occupied Socialist Party headquarters in Paris and an empty council building, criticising what they called the inadequacy of plans by the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, to fight poverty.

African immigrants entered two more French churches in an effort to gain residence permits, witnesses said. About 100 peacefully occupied St Jeanne d'Arc church in southern Paris yesterday, and two dozen Mauritians occupied St Pierre church in Le Havre on Saturday.

Others have occupied Evry cathedral near Paris since March 7. — Reuters

The regions have a total budget of about \$7.5 billion.

President Jacques Chirac refused to intervene in the campaign despite predictions of a severe setback, but has already started talks about a new joint rightwing movement, which would include his own Gaullists and members of the centrist Union for French Democracy, in readiness for presidential and general elections in 2002.

The Gaullist former prime minister, Edouard Balladur, who was trying to hold the Ile de France region, based on Paris, said last night the right was in serious difficulty and needed to discuss unity and new ideas.

But the elections also confirmed the growing impact of Jean-Marie Le Pen's extremist National Front, which was in a position to arbitrate on the future chairman for the Paris region and Provence-Cote d'Azur, based on Marseille. The racist movement's members will also play a decisive role in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais which is controlled by the Greens.

The Socialist candidates easily outdistanced their national coalition partners, Les Verts. The Green leader, Dominique Voynet, said before the poll that an attempt by Socialists to take over the presidency would be considered unfriendly.

Voters also had to elect *départements* or county councillors. Among the candidates was the prime minister, who voted in his constituency near Toulouse, and Bernard Chirac, the president's wife, in the central *département* of the Corrèze.

Aftermath of Kosovo onslaught



An ethnic Albanian holds a candle and a poster of Mother Teresa as thousands march to church in Pristina yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: MLADEN ANTONOV

Ruined hamlet reveals Serbian
assault on Albanian clan rule

Jonathan Steele in Prekaz

CHICKENS peck their way over smashed soles in what was Adem Jashari's living room. The walls of the Prekaz village leader's home have gaping holes from mortar fire.

Apart from abandoned animals, and a dwindling number of journalists visiting the ruined hamlet and the field where 54 mounds mark the graves of victims of last week's Serbian attack, Prekaz is lifeless. Paramilitary police watch through binoculars from their base in a pine wood above the village, but they no longer stop visitors.

As the shock of the Serbian onslaught abates, the questions surrounding it multiply. Was the attack a genuine effort to eliminate suspected ethnic Albanian terrorists or a message of intimidation to an entire society? Is the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) — which allies of the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, claim Mr Jashari helped lead — a guerrilla organisation or a bunch of clan leaders defending their patch?

The region of Drenica, in which Prekaz lies some 20 miles west of Kosovo's cap-

ital, Pristina, has always been a wild area with little love for outside government, whether by the Turks, the Yugoslav monarchy or President Tito's communist state. Its isolation stems from its lack of strategic significance, and its tight clan structure which, until last week, alien rulers saw little need to challenge.

The modernising influence of the television satellite dish on Mr Jashari's wall — now riddled with bullet holes —

riages were taken by the males, under one head. Property was held in common. Women ate apart from men.

"We accepted their traditional way of life, and they accepted us as the state power. There was a *modus vivendi*," says Azem Vilasi, an ethnic Albanian the former League of Communists, which ran the province before Mr Milosevic put Kosovo under total Serb control in 1989.

The *zadrugas* were more

'The Jasharis had no political
agenda. They were a symbol of
cohesion, like a Sicilian family'

was not enough to end the tradition of the hierarchical extended family in which one man was boss.

Push through the door in the less damaged complex opposite Mr Jashari's ruined home, and you enter a four-sided compound with twin two-storey houses alongside farm buildings and animal sheds. It is like entering an open-air museum.

It was a typical *zadruga*, a family mini-state which could comprise 40 or 50 members. Key decisions including mar-

under threat in Albania itself, where Enver Hoxha's absolutist Marxist-Leninist regime tried to dismantle rural clan structures and emancipate women. In Drenica and other Kosovo backwaters old customs survived.

That frustration at Serbia's ending of Kosovo's autonomy should lead to armed resistance is hardly surprising. The KLA "only appeared in April 1996 and started to act publicly last year", Shkelzen Maligj, a local political analyst, says.

"At first we thought it was a small group, with logistical support from abroad, which attacked Serb police stations. Since last autumn local people in Drenica have appeared with arms, and it looked more like the start of a guerrilla movement."

A journalist on the Albanian-language paper Koha, who encountered KLA representatives in Drenica last year, says he was surprised to find them "initially more nervous than we were, since we were in a *Pajero* — the kind of car used by Serbian paramilitaries". He adds: "They did not look like a powerful or confident group."

Like many other ethnic Albanians he argues that the KLA's importance has been exaggerated by Belgrade propaganda to justify repression. A genuine counter-terrorist strategy, he says, would try to capture and interrogate suspects rather than use indiscriminate force.

Mr Vilasi says: "The Jashari family is strong and famous locally, but it had no political agenda. It was merely a symbol of cohesion, like a Sicilian family." President Milosevic's police action, he adds, was nothing more than a big display of force "to scare Albanians in general".

Kosovar march
to church belies
Belgrade's
'Islamic card'

IN THE latest protest at Serbian repression, thousands of Kosovo Albanians walked silently through central Pristina yesterday to the Roman Catholic church of Saint Ndon, a local martyr, *Our Correspondent in Pristina writes*.

"Most Kosovars are Catholics, if they are anything," Ardit Arifaj, a local journalist said. "Serb propaganda plays the Islamic card, as though they are fighting fundamentalism and an Islamic invasion."

In the throng, Jashari Khashi, a professor of English at Pristina university, said: "I was only taken to a mosque once as a child; it was forbidden under communism. My daughters visit the Catholic church on Christmas Eve. It's become a national tradition, whatever your religion."

Bishop Artemije, the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo, said in Pristina yesterday: "We condemn violence and terrorism from whatever side it comes." But he dismissed even moderate proposals for an autonomous Kosovo as "the destruction of the Serbian state, which Kosovo has been part of for 800 years".

Men of the
world take
on Three
Sisters

Paul Webster in Lyon

AFTER 10 years of preparation, the Lyon National Opera this weekend launched one of the most challenging lyrical works of recent times: a multicultural operatic version of Chekhov's Three Sisters.

Created by the Hungarian Peter Eötvös, a protégé of the composer Zoltan Kodaly, *Trois Sœurs* was sung in Russian, staged by a Japanese director, Ushio Amagatsu, and conducted by the theatre's American musical director, Kent Nagano, who also heads Manchester's Hallé orchestra.

The most daring innovation by the French company



An all-male cast, including Gary Boyce (in red), tackles the Three Sisters in an operatic version of Chekhov's play

was the use of four counter-tenors to sing the parts of Olga, Masha and Irina and their sister-in-law, Natasha.

Critics at the first performance praised the work, forecasting that it would be an essential element of 21st century repertoire. There was as much applause for the commissioning policies of one of Europe's most active provincial theatres.

Eötvös, aged 54, a composer whose career includes musical direction of Pierre Boulez's Ensemble Inter-

Contemporain and appearances as a conductor at the Proms and Covent Garden, worked with the Cologne Opera's librettist, Claus Honeberg, to create *Trois Sœurs*.

The London-born counter-tenor Gary Boyce had the part of the social climbing Natasha. His range still reaches soprano at the age of 34. Natasha's sisters-in-law were sung by two Russians and a Frenchman. Performances continue until March 24.

Suharto digs in
against reforms

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

INDONESIA'S hopes of finding a way out of its deepening economic crisis hang in the balance this week as officials of the International Monetary Fund arrive to try to salvage a \$43 billion (£27 billion) bailout programme.

But an embattled President Suharto looks more obdurately opposed than ever to meeting their calls for reform. The 75-year-old, who was elected to a seventh five-year term last week, announced at the weekend a new cabinet already dubbed by critics "the cabinet from hell".

The new ministerial line-up is also dismaying Western financial analysts, particularly for its inclusion of figures conspicuously linked to much of what has gone wrong in recent years and who now obstruct the IMF reforms.

"Everybody knows what it is — it's a list of the corrupt," snapped a Western diplomat in Jakarta.

The biggest slap in the face to the IMF was delivered with President Suharto's selection of the timber tycoon and his old golfing partner Mohammed "Bob" Hasan as his trade minister.

Hasan is regarded as the biggest crony in a system of crony capitalism the IMF wants dismantled. The IMF specifically targeted his monopoly of Indonesia's lucrative timber industry in reforms agreed by President Suharto in mid-January, but he has survived.

Less surprising but no less controversial is the appointment of his eldest daughter,

Siti Hartiyanti "Tutut" Rukmana, as his social affairs minister. She is active on social issues, but her presence in the cabinet symbolises the growing influence of the president's children over government policy as they pursue the interests of their individual corporate empires.

Tutut, a business tycoon in her own right and said to wield increasing control over access to the president, is believed by diplomats to have picked about half the cabinet.

The new finance minister, Puad Bawazier, and the home

affairs minister, Hartono, are closely linked to her.

The political scientist Dewi Fortuna Anwar said the president's priority was to form a "solid team" and impose the kind of cohesion lacking in the previous government. "I wouldn't want to dismiss the cabinet entirely," Hasan and Tutut will be more exposed to public scrutiny as ministers than before their appointments, she adds.

Most comment, however, is sharply negative. "This is not a cabinet of reform but of political retrenchment," concluded a Western financial analyst.

And Amien Rais, a government critic and leader of a Muslim organisation with more than 20 million follow-

ers, said: "This cabinet smells strongly of nepotism."

Such views can only add fuel to the unruly on-campus protests, the scene last week of increasingly vehement anti-Suharto demonstrations. Military chiefs have said they will allow student protest to continue, but they are resorting to tougher measures to crack down on dissent elsewhere, diplomats say.

Authorities detained more than 140 people in Jakarta alone last month, some on more serious criminal charges than the normal offence of disturbing the peace. They include actress Rama Sarumpaet, seized last week after a small protest meeting.

The danger of an explosion of violence across Indonesia depends less on immediate political reform than the availability and price of food and other essentials, and, say diplomats, for the moment these are stable. But failure to agree with the IMF's terms increasingly risks tipping Indonesia over into isolation or chaos, or both.

Financial analysts say the new cabinet suggests that President Suharto is ready to take his strategy of brinkmanship to the limit, holding out for easier terms from the IMF and international creditors.

"Each is calling the other's bluff. Indonesia has international pretensions, and its standing depends on its prosperity, that's been Suharto's line all along," said Dewi Fortuna Anwar. "But if Indonesia is humiliated, it also feels that no amount of money is worth the insult, so it's treading a fine line."

Leader comment, page 9



A fisherman carries a sack of mussels through a river in Jakarta, as Indonesia faces continuing shortages of food

PHOTOGRAPH: DYLAN MARTINEZ

Open warfare in cabinet as defence officials deride proposed troop withdrawal from security zone

Israel divided on Lebanon

Julian Borger
Middle East Correspondent

ISRAEL'S government was in open disarray over Lebanon yesterday as defence officials poured scorn on a plan for a phased unilateral troop withdrawal from a southern border zone.

The proposal, by the infrastructure minister, Ariel Sharon, would end 16 years of occupation.

Some commentators argued that the formulation of rival Lebanon proposals reflected a long-running power struggle over national security policy within the cabinet, and warned that there was little chance of a pullout in the near future.

But the Ma'ariv newspaper reported that a local security arrangement between Israeli

forces and the Lebanese army was already in operation in one area of southern Lebanon.

In a deal Ma'ariv said had been brokered by the US state department, Israel's allied militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA) pulled out of its positions around the village of Palus — close to the SLA stronghold of Jezz — about three months ago.

In return, the Lebanese army had promised the area being used as a transit route by the Shi'ite guerrilla movement, Hizbullah, for attacks on Israeli and SLA positions in the occupied strip of southern Lebanon known as the security zone.

According to a plan put forward by Mr Sharon, a former general who orchestrated the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Israel would continue to withdraw from the zone one district at a time, while test-



Mordechai Vanunu, seen here for the first time since his spying conviction in 1986. Israel ended more than 11 years of solitary confinement for Vanunu on Thursday, raising hopes for his early release from an 18-year term in Ashkelon jail

ing the Lebanese army's ability and willingness to control Hizbullah. The pull-back would not be negotiated but would rely on the threat of punitive strikes and even a fresh invasion if the Lebanese government failed to police the border.

Mr Sharon launched his proposal on television in a clear challenge to Yitzhak Mordechai, the defence minister, who is pursuing a quite different strategy involving a peace agreement with Lebanon and its regional patron, Syria. Under the Mordechai

plan, backed by the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel would withdraw from the security zone once and for all in exchange for security guarantees from Beirut and Damascus, possibly with France as arbiter and at the head of an international buffer force.

Mr Mordechai has made no secret of his fury at Mr Sharon's efforts to encroach on his turf. "It is a recipe for disaster. If we pull out without a comprehensive regional peace treaty, there will be more terrorist attacks in the north, and we will be forced to go right back in again," said a senior official close to the defence minister.

The official also questioned Mr Sharon's proposal to do for the SLA, which has hitherto owed its survival to the Israeli military presence in south Lebanon. Questioned

on the SLA's future, Mr Sharon said: "We will not abandon them."

During a weekend summit in Damascus, the Syrian and Lebanese governments rejected the offer of a negotiated withdrawal, declaring that the Israeli pull-back must be unconditional. Israeli officials believe the Syrian president, Hafez al-Assad, will only rein in Hizbullah once the Golan Heights — captured by Israel in 1967 — are returned to Syria, something Mr Netanyahu has so far refused to do.

The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, yesterday insisted on going ahead with a visit to the controversial Israeli settlement of Har Homa in Arab East Jerusalem tomorrow, despite an Israeli government statement describing his plan as unacceptable.

WORLD NEWS 7

Piece by piece collectors strip Iraq of its history

Barbara Crossette
In Hatra, Iraq

AROUND a year ago in a hazy but increasingly familiar act of vandalism thieves struck the ruins of the ancient Iraqi temple city of Hatra, once capital of a mysterious kingdom whose people worshipped the sun, the moon and Mars.

The thieves were discriminating. They looted off the head of a priceless, 1,800-year-old statue of a king. It had recently been restored.

A few hundred miles to the south, in Babylon, glass museum cases were smashed and the finest examples of cuneiform writing — wedge-shaped inscriptions on clay tablets and small cylinder seals — were taken. The artifacts had been used to authenticate Babylonian documents.

A few months ago, at Khorsabad, the magnificent head of an Assyrian winged bull, dating from the first century BC was cut off and sawn into 11 pieces for easier shipping. All over Iraq, the modern nation situated in the fertile crescent of ancient Mesopotamia, centuries of history are disappearing piece by piece, Iraqi archaeologists and Western scholars say.

American experts who worked in Iraq before the Gulf war have been warning for several years that Iraq's archaeological sites are in danger of being stripped clean.

The thieves arrive with guns, sedative drugs, cars with false registration plates

The head of an Assyrian winged bull was sawn up for easier shipping

and armies of desert nomads prepared to dig for meagre wages. They often have lists of what to take, said Mounad Said, director-general of Iraq's department of antiquities and heritage.

"This criminal world is so well organised that we can trace some routes directly from a Bedouin tent in the desert to one of the main dealers of collectors in England, the United States or Switzerland," he said.

Several factors are combining to make Iraq highly vul-

nerable to archaeological theft.

First, there is the trove itself. For much of this century, Iraq had been assiduously restoring and guarding its antiquities and archaeological sites, prohibiting or strictly limiting the export of artifacts. The process was accelerated under the Iraqi monarchy, set up after the first world war when the defeated Ottoman Empire, which had ruled Iraq since

'Mesopotamia is not the cultural property of Iraq but of humankind'

the 16th century, was dismantled and Britain was given a mandate to administer the country.

A British archaeologist, Gertrude Bell, who came to Iraq as secretary to the British governor, was instrumental in helping Iraq set up institutions to preserve its exceptional heritage. She was often a lone voice against the long-standing European practice of pillaging sites for Western museums and private collectors.

The country became a treasure house of extraordinary proportions, and everything was scrupulously catalogued. The Iraq Museum in Baghdad was ranked among the greatest of its kind. Around the country, dozens more were built.

Iraqi archaeologists say they have always been aware that they are responsible for safeguarding a heritage significant beyond the country's borders.

According to legend, the Garden of Eden blossomed here. More verifiably, this was the home of Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian empires whose collective records date back 7,000 years. Cities were first built and recognisable governments established. The plough, the wheel and irrigation systems were perfected.

"Mesopotamia is not the cultural property of the Iraqi government," said Mr Said. "It is the property of humankind. Everybody knows that the cradle of Mediterranean, Western and Arab civilisations lies in large part in Mesopotamia as well as in Egypt and Greece."



A man waits at a mosque in Monrovia for his rice ration. It is hoped Mr Clinton's visit signals a new US focus on the problems of countries such as Liberia. PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID GUTENFELDER

African markets shape Clinton's itinerary

Alex Duval Smith
in Johannesburg on the president's visit to the continent's reborn as a trading partner

BILL CLINTON'S six-nation tour of Africa next week — the first by a sitting US president for almost 20 years — will reward good book-balancers and strategic friends. But it will also lay bare mixed African feelings about the extent to which fragile economies can live up to Washington's expectations.

Last week 16 West African foreign affairs ministers, meeting in the Ivory Coast, resolved that Ecomog — the Nigerian-led force which backs the military junta in Sierra Leone — should become the region's permanent peace-keeping force.

The hard-won decision was a signal to the US, Britain and France, which like the idea of hands-on input in African peacekeeping without the messy business of providing troops — that at least part of the continent can police itself.

At the same time, Washington sent back the message — through a House of Representatives vote on measures to encourage trade with Africa — that it has its eye on 700 million potential consumers.

As Susan Rice, the US assistant secretary of state for African affairs, said: "Africans are taking their seats at the global economic table and arriving with hardy appetites for lucrative commercial dealings."

President Clinton claims that his 12-day visit to Ghana, Uganda, Rwanda (for a brief stopover), South Africa, Botswana and Senegal is about "delivering the message that the US stands ready to be a partner in Africa's prosperity."

He will signal to the US, and especially African Americans, that there is

more to this continent than starvation, drought and war. Hillary and Chelsea will add a human touch, joining him on visits to up-bell development projects, successful AIDS campaigns and women's groups.

That the famine-ridden Africans of the cold war years have been reinvented as trading partners grates somewhat with the likes of President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. His country, unavoidable for President Clinton because of its economic might, is also the American's most sceptical host.

In his new year speech at the White House, President Mandela praised no punches in his condemnation of what he called America's "ambitions and extensive" aid-for-trade agenda and the debt noose in which the

'Africans are taking their seats at the global economic table with hardy appetites'

Western world holds Africa. On the other hand, the US president, Thabo Mbeki, is known as an economic realist who will lend a ready ear to this US president.

Although it detracts from his feel-good agenda, President Clinton decided two days ago that a stop-off in Kigali, the Rwandan capital, was unavoidable. He will "address the gross genocide and violence that has so disrupted Central Africa", said the presidential spokesman, Mike McCure.

Senegal will provide Mr Clinton with an opportunity to address slavery — and possibly to apologise for it — but it is also a Francophone country looking for new partners.

France has recently disbanded its colonial "co-operation ministry" and announced military cutbacks in Africa. Its former West African colonies fear for

their single currency, the CFA, which is pegged to the franc and faces an uncertain future after the introduction of the euro.

Uganda, where President Clinton will meet heads of state from 10 Central African countries on March 25, is one of the darlings of development economists and has a good human rights record. It meets the good governance criteria of the Growth and Opportunity Bill — the trade plan passed by the House of Representatives last week.

Another top pupil on the itinerary is Botswana, recently rated third by a Harvard study which listed African countries according to good governance and competition. It has gone from being among the world's 20 poorest countries at independence in 1966 to being described as an "upper middle income" country by the World Bank. Diamonds are its secret.

Ghana has textbook qualities among cash-crop economies, cocoa being its mainstay. Having had one of the strongest economies at independence in 1957, it went into free-fall only to re-establish fiscal control and engage in a privatisation programme. Fact sheets handed to accompanying journalists are likely to feature an impressive graph showing declining inflation — from more than 100 per cent in 1983 to almost single figures today.

While most observers can see why President Clinton has selected each of his hosts, there is some criticism of his lack of a human rights agenda and the fact that Rwanda was an afterthought. But most agree that his visit is good news for Africa.

Steven Friedman, director of the South African Centre for Policy Studies, said: "Few people expect new factories to spring up just because President Clinton has dropped by. But there is a pretty broad consensus that Africa needs investment and that we are now a continent divided not by superpowers but between super business."

Greece leaves UK in euro isolation

Martin Walker in Brussels

BRITAIN and Sweden were left on the sidelines of the European monetary system over the weekend when Greece took the drachma back into the exchange rate mechanism, a significant step towards joining the single currency in 2001.

The price was a 14 per cent devaluation against a basket of European currencies, which will make Greece a cheaper destination for British tourists this summer. At a meeting in Brussels, the European Union's monetary committee also agreed to revalue the Irish punt by 3 per cent.

The decision puts Greece — one of Europe's most troubled economies — on track to become the 12th member of the euro zone, leaving only sterling and the Swedish krona outside the ERM. Maastricht rules require countries to be part of the exchange rate system for two years prior to qualifying for full monetary union.

The monetary committee meeting in Brussels was the last opportunity for currency adjustments before the European Commission gives its verdict next week on which countries qualify to join the single currency.

"The drachma's new central exchange rate and the supportive package announced by the government should provide a sustainable basis for the government's commitment to join EMU as from 2001," said the International Monetary Fund managing director, Michel Camdessus, yesterday, in an important signal of approval for Greek entry.

The weekend devaluation was inevitable after the drachma became a target for speculators in the foreign exchange markets on Friday, when rumours started circulating about the decision to move back into the ERM. Most analysts believe the drachma is significantly overvalued

as a result of the government's tough anti-inflation drive.

The currency readjustments provided ammunition to both sides in the euro debate. Only Britain and Sweden now remain outside the Exchange Rate Mechanism, and EU officials noted last night that Britain, Sweden and Denmark seem increasingly like "a remote northern fringe" to the euro bloc, whose birth is only six weeks away.

Ireland's decision to revalue the punt, imposed by the country's soaring growth rates, may be another straw in the wind. The EU statement noted that the revaluation "will support the authorities in their efforts to keep the Irish economy on a path of sustainable growth with price stability". It also signals that Dublin's financial policies are defined by Europe now, and not by the City of London.

The bold Greek move could strengthen the arguments of EMU sceptics in Germany and Holland, however. The prospect of bringing in the drachma, on top of worries about importing the weaknesses of the Italian lira, suggest that the new European Central Bank will have to be very orthodox to persuade markets that the euro will be a strong currency.

"One thing is clear. The central bank must aggressively defend the drachma on Monday," warned Harris Makkas, treasurer of the Bank of America in Greece.

The fate of the drachma is likely to depend on economic reforms to be unveiled today by finance minister Yannis Papanastasiou. They are expected to include more privatisation, limits on wage rises, and measures to liberalise the labour market and control the rising costs of social security.

The reforms are aimed at cutting the inflation and debt levels which have so far kept Greece outside the criteria for joining the euro.

Hindu nationalist asked to form government

Suzanne Goldenberg
in New Delhi

THE nationalist leader, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, yesterday received the call he had agonised over for five days: an invitation from India's president, K. R. Narayanan, to form the next government.

India's first Hindu nationalist government, a coalition of more than a dozen regional parties and several independent MPs led by the Bharatiya Janata Party, is expected to be sworn in on Thursday. His alliance — still a few seats short of a majority — will face a confidence vote within 10 days of being sworn in.

Mr Vajpayee, aged 71, is one of India's most respected parliamentarians. But recent days have shown how easily his BJP can be brought to heel by a rebellious ally.

The BJP owes its invitation

to govern to its wayward ally, the Tamil screen queen Jayaram Jayalalitha, and the Italian-born heir to India's enduring political dynasty, Sonia Gandhi.

Yesterday's summons arrived after Ms Jayalalitha affirmed her support for the alliance, and Ms Gandhi ruled out a claim to power by the Congress party.

The denouement to India's political crisis comes nearly two weeks after a BJP-led alliance won the most seats — but fell short of a majority — in general elections. The roller-coaster ride, courtesy of Ms Jayalalitha, has shaken the BJP's confidence that it can impose its will on an alliance of regional parties, Sikh separatists, old-style socialists, Hindu extremists and mavericks. In 1996, Mr Vajpayee led a BJP government which collapsed after 13 days.

Despite earlier pledges of support, Ms Jayalalitha de-

layed this government for five days. She angrily denied she had sought to install key allies in the finance and law ministries to influence corruption cases she is fighting.

Ms Jayalalitha was finally named as the BJP leader of the most suave BJP leaders, Jaswant Singh, flew to Madras for negotiations. Ms Jayalalitha agreed to join the government so long as it fulfils promises to make Tamil a national language, to act in the state's favour in water disputes, and to set aside 66 per cent of government jobs for disadvantaged castes.

Earlier yesterday Ms Gandhi told the president her Congress party would not stake a claim. "We cannot do the numbers," she said.

The widow of slain prime minister Rajiv Gandhi became president of the Congress party on Saturday, amid riotous street celebrations.

News in brief

Vatican reveals Catholics' role in Holocaust

THE Vatican today unveils its definitive assessment of the role played by Roman Catholics during the Holocaust, writes John Heeper in Rome.

The document, which has taken more than 10 years to prepare, is expected to acknowledge that neither the clergy nor the laity did enough to stop the extermination of the Jewish people by the Nazis and their allies. But

it not yet clear whether it will specifically criticise the then Pope, Pius XII, for his still-disputed role in the second world war.

The present Pope, John Paul II, has made a series of reconciliatory gestures towards the Jews. In 1986 he became the first pontiff to enter a synagogue. Last October, at a scholarly convention on the origins of anti-Semitism in Christian doctrine, he

said the reaction of many Roman Catholics "was not that which humanity had a right to expect".

But he has scrupulously avoided judging the role of Pius XII and declined to make available the Vatican's wartime archives to researchers. Two years ago, in Germany, the Pope was to have read a speech which included a defence of his predecessor's role, but he skipped the passage.

Brazilian firefighters wage losing battle in grasslands and Amazon rainforests

FIREFIGHTERS battling against infernos in Brazil's northern Amazon yesterday appealed for more personnel and equipment, but the arrival of essential crucial water-bombing helicopters were delayed.

Fires started by subsistence farmers in the state of Roraima have burned out of control for two months, destroying a vast swath of high-

land savannah near the Venezuelan border.

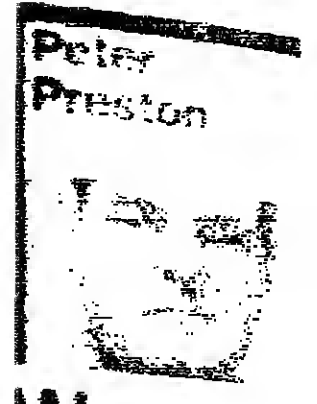
Officials say 2.2 million acres of farmland has been burned, while a severe drought — blamed on El Niño — has killed 20,000 cattle.

Now the flames are eating into remote rainforest areas which are normally too wet to burn. A column of fire has pushed at least seven miles into the Yanomami Indians' jungle reservation. Other Amerindian tribes which live in the savannah, such as the Macuxi and Wapixana, have seen crops fail in the drought and are running out of food.

"The first thing I already burned all the vegetation in the savannah areas. Our concern now is with the forest. The ecological damage is irreversible," a fire captain said. — Reuters.

Handwritten note: "Jp 11/10/50"

Grunge party



A cabinet of chums

Suharto's new threat

ASIA IS no exception to the global risk of instability. This lesson, long denied while its "economic miracle" was soaring, is underlined by two stories high on the bad news list this weekend. The plight of North Korea's refugees, exclusively reported from the Chinese border by our correspondent, should come as no surprise after three years of crisis. But the bizarre make-up of the new Indonesian cabinet would barely have been noticed a year ago when Jakarta was being praised for its feverish economic growth. Now it is different: when the world's financial community fears it may suffer, the time has come for a new Prime Minister of Japan whose own economic policies have met with disapproval. If Indonesia should implode, the name of Mohammad Hasan, the new minister of trade and industry, will be inscribed high on the roll of folly. "Bob" Hasan is an old chum and golfing partner of the president who evokes the shady world of cronyism.

The only issue is whether his name should come before that of the new minister for social welfare — President Suharto's daughter, "Tutu" Rukmana. Hasan is also directly linked to the country's environmental disaster, as one of the biggest tycoons of the timber industry which has fanned the fires by burning off unwanted growth and clearing the land for pulp plantations. Last August, just one month before the smoke haze began to blanket neighbouring countries, Suharto ceremoniously opened a new \$900 million wood-pulp mill in East Kalimantan on behalf of Hasan's timber company. East Kalimantan has been burning ever since, and on Saturday the local health authorities reported more than 2,000 recent cases of smog-related respiratory illness.

The threat which North Korea's crisis poses to stability in north-east Asia is real but hard to measure. One day Pyongyang announces wartime mobilisation — although it is linked to annual military exercises — and the next, its diplomats arrive in Geneva in peaceful mood for talks with the US, China and South Korea. The tales of hardship brought out by refugees indicate something approaching famine and a breakdown of order, at least in some northern areas, rather than acute deprivation in a society still continuing to function, which international aid agencies have reported. The emergence of a new government in the South may offer some hope for better relations less affected by ideology on either side, in which Seoul can keep the Pyongyang regime from disruptive collapse. But one has to ask how far rational calculation is possible under a one-man hegemony and an overpowering personality cult in the North.

The North Korean question should be posed in Jakarta too. Can Indonesia be expected to behave rationally under the cult of Suharto — and is the stability of south-east Asia also at risk? The Japanese prime minister is the latest of a string of visitors to beg Suharto to heed IMF advice and dismantle the profligate monopolies held by his family and friends. The new cabinet makes the prospect even less likely. The IMF may not have a brilliant track record, but its prescription would be vastly preferable for most Indonesians to a corrupt autocracy masquerading as patriotic autonomy. In January the IMF bailed out Indonesia for the second time in what became known as the "rescue of the rescue": this too has been frustrated.

Suharto and his loyal central bank are now playing the card of national sovereignty to present Indonesia as the innocent victim of foreign meddling. The question is not just whether the IMF will be able to stage "the rescue of the rescue of the rescue" — but whether it should even attempt to do so. Indonesia does have one advantage over North Korea: its students are at last on the move and public opinion can no longer be taken for granted. It might be more sensible to stand aside and leave the Suharto regime to its uncertain fate.

Gushing greed

Time to turn off the tap

A NOVEL form of blame avoidance has been devised by the Water Services Association which speaks for the privatised water companies. The PR problem for the WSA is this: water pressure in mains supplies is being reduced so drastically that firemen are being hampered in fighting serious fires. There are already horror stories where fire appliances have had to pump water out of rivers, or let buildings burn down, because the pressure was too low.

A WSA spokesman did his water-leveling best yesterday to gloss this unpromising material. It was not a question of a fall

in pressure, he said, but an entirely different question of "pressure management". He then showed real brilliance in shifting the blame on to the people who have complained — the fire-fighting services. Yes, the Department of the Environment had called a meeting tomorrow to discuss the problem. But it had been called, the spokesman said, to "discuss the impact of Fire Brigade activities on water supplies."

This beats hollow the old excuse from British Rail about "the wrong sort of snow". The problem is not that the privatised water companies, while dolloping out huge profits to their boards and shareholders, are skimping on the prevention of water loss. It is not just a trick to reduce the total flow of water — now the basis on which water loss is calculated — by lowering the pressure, instead of stopping the leaks. Now all is clear: too many firemen are having an "impact... on water supplies". In other words, too many members of the public are having fires.

The example could catch on among the other privatised industries. May we be told that trains are dangerously overcrowded because of the "impact of passengers"? Perhaps we shall, unless the government decides to make its own impact — and impose a hose ban on their gushing greed.

Letters to the Editor

On track for a space collision

THE seemingly inadequate safety practices of Railtrack raises important issues (Railway safety sold down the profit line, March 14). It does not need a crystal ball to predict that a major rail accident with multiple fatalities is an inevitability. As in other areas where business can sacrifice safety to profit, satisfactory intervention must now become paramount. Effective deterrence in the form of a law of corporate killing which carries the real threat of imprisonment of named company directors responsible for safety management is a matter of urgency.

Dr Charles Woolfson, Glasgow.

DON'T worry about the asteroid (Now the big bang theory that could end it all, March 13). There is no scientific proof that it will hit the Earth and there hasn't been a really big asteroid hit for 65 million years. I think that was roughly the logic that assured us that beef was safe.

Bob Browning, London.

IGNITE the atmosphere. "Tidal waves" travelling at the speed of light" (Leader, March 14)? The atmosphere would not ignite, as the combustion of nitrogen and oxygen would not be self-sustaining and nothing with mass can reach the speed of light (about 300,000km per sec). Glenn Baron, Bath.

RADIO 4 has not cut its expenditure by 30 per cent (Radio chaos, The Week, March 14). It costs £79 million a year and is the most costly of all our radio services. James Boyle is today announcing a package which cost an additional £2 million. To get the best value out of the licence fee some programme areas have been asked to make efficiencies, but the money saved is being spent elsewhere. In drama alone Radio 4 has an additional £800,000 to invest next year. Matthew Bannister, Director of Radio, BBC.

The real benefits crisis

IF the proposals to reduce the numbers of people claiming disability living allowance (benefits crisis exposed, March 13) go ahead the effects may be even greater than you indicate. There are about 7 million carers in the UK, with 1.5 million caring for somebody over 20 hours a week, and hundreds of thousands of families where partners, relatives or friends have given up jobs to care for a disabled person. They are providing the vital link that enables care in the community to continue. Carers tell us financial hardship is one of their biggest problems in continuing to care, and for many families the benefits to which the family as a whole is entitled — including DLA — are essential.

To remove this entitlement from two in three is absurd — particularly when balanced against the figure of £34 billion that it is estimated (Institute of Actuaries) carers save the state each year by supporting people who otherwise may be unable to manage at home without care, or may need residential care.

Peter Harvey, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, London.

WE need a public debate about how much independence the state should guarantee someone who becomes disabled. Saying that Labour will always help those in need says nothing if there is no definition of need. I suggest, as the country gets richer, the level of guaranteed independence should increase. We should therefore expect real expenditure on disability benefits to rise.

It is right to ask if the most severely disabled people get enough help — the maximum £84.10 from DLA does not buy much help. But before it is known how much money can be saved by finding work for people on incapacity benefit, we should not conclude that they should get more at the expense of DLA for less severely disabled people.

John Robertson, Sheffield.

THE real benefits crisis is that thousands of pensioners and other claimants are being cheated out of payments. The welfare system is so riddled with incompetence and Scapegoat-like adaptations that it takes thousands of social-work hours each week sorting out errors and filling in 38-page forms.

Other north European countries with less healthy economies pay much more out in benefits with a less stigmatising attitude. Perhaps they don't waste so much on bureaucratic attempts to clamp down on fraud.

Patrick Graham, Cardiff.

DISABLED people are being wrongly denied benefit — not wrongly awarded

benefit. There is nothing wrong with the benefit regulations themselves. The explanation is the poor quality of decision-making by the Benefits Agency.

In 1997 we represented 38 claimants before a Disability Appeal Tribunal who had had their DLA claim refused, withdrawn or reduced by the Benefits Agency. The tribunal supported the Benefits Agency's decision in only three cases. The remainder were awarded benefit for the first time or had their benefit increased. These appeals resulted in payment to the claimant of a total of £96,700 arrears and future annual entitlement of £90,000.

Peter Turville, Oxfordshire Welfare Rights, Headington, Oxford.

THE disability lobby protests too much, at least for me. As a disabled person who is active, I don't see why my taxes should support allowances for people who aren't really disabled or don't really need money; or why they shouldn't be reassessed to see whether they do need help, or why they should not pay tax if they can afford it.

As an active person who is disabled, I should be glad to lose my own allowance, in exchange for proper access to streets and buildings, transport and entertainment, shops and restaurants.

Nicholas Walter, London.

families and of pupils receiving free school meals about as high as Southwark's, but in terms of social class, Camden stands out as one of the highest-status LEA areas, with the third highest proportion of professionals and managers, while Southwark and Lambeth are a similar below average in this respect.

Whether Camden's or another LEA's schools are doing better demands much more serious attention than crude comparisons between the readily available indicators.

Prof Ian Gordon, University of Reading.

Making a meal of GCSE tables

THE Audit Commission's report (Well-off schools fail to deliver, March 12) seems to accept that social composition is a major influence on how well schools and local education authorities do in GCSE league tables.

The trouble is that the commission relies on a single social indicator, the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals — a quite imperfect predictor of the proportion of students attaining five or more good GCSE grades.

This indicator largely reflects the proportion of families with non-working lone parents, which has been found to be a key influence on exam performance.

The confusion introduced is evident in the commission's surprise that Camden ("one of the poorest authorities") achieved similar GCSE results to Lincolnshire ("one of the most prosperous") and that Southwark, Camden has proportions of lone-parent



Go to bed at ten? Get a life

I WAS disappointed to see your negative image of a woman pensioner, apparently aimless and lonely, glad to go to bed at 10pm to end the empty evening (Woman's Hours, 12, March 9). Women pensioners and no longer be under the pressures of the workplace, but most of them know all about time management — they have so many things they want to fit into the week. I am secretary of our local University of the Third Age and attend groups on writing, local history, antiques, voice skills, 20th-century music and architecture, as well as going on country walks, pub lunches and cultural outings.

U3A groups are co-ordinated by members, many of them women with an expertise to impart or an enthusiasm to share. My friends also have committees to charity work, to looking after their grandchildren, to working in schools and hospitals and to running local organisations. They probably have health problems, but they still enjoy themselves hugely. As I am striving to do at the moment, by mastering a recent update on my computer.

Jean English, Lancaster.

Starry future

YOUR leader (March 13) contrasts the news of exciting developments in US astronomy with what you see as a negative move in UK to close the Royal Greenwich Observatory.

It is precisely to release a much-needed £4 million a year for UK astronomers to invest in new projects, in space and ground-based astronomy, that the Particle Physics and Astronomy Council reluctantly decided last year to consolidate the technical support of our optical telescopes, now all overseas, at our site in Edinburgh. Few, if any, astronomers will be lost to the UK programme when transfers into the university sector are completed.

The observatory founded by Charles II in 1674 is now likely to return from Cambridge to its original home in Greenwich. I am confident that move will herald an important new phase in the life

Snorts of contempt over the pretensions of pop stars

INTERESTING new policy — printing tracts about reality by people who have clearly lost all touch with it. Alan McGee asks: "Why do 19-year-olds drink vast quantities of alcohol? Because it's legal and so they assume it's for boring old men" (Coastline Supernova, March 14).

What would this man inhabit? Sadly, his brain cells have been added by his nasty brush with drugs. Yes, we must talk about addictions and poisons. Yes, we probably need to make changes and fast. And yes, the media attitude seems to veer from one extreme to the other. But the fact is that millions of 19-year-olds drink vast quantities of alcohol, which is probably an even bigger problem than the misuse of other drugs.

Alan's lifestyle of emergencies at Cedars-Sinai hospital in California is as far from the real lives of most Brits as Bill Clinton's knowledge of our NHS. Telling us you know what it's like because you've been there, Alan, begs the questions — why did you do it in the first place; why do celebrities who "clean up" always think we want to hear how clever (and how rich) they were in kicking the habit?

If you'd never snorted coke and given all the cash wasted up your nose to a charity dedicated to saving people from the perils of addiction, Alan, you might have saved a few dozen lives.

Jonathan King, London.

ALAN McGee should be reminded that one of the main objections to legalising cannabis is precisely that if it were legalised like alcohol, young people would turn to more addictive and dangerous drugs because cannabis has become less risky and therefore "boring".

Anne Webster, Silchester, Berks.

THAT a collection of spoilt-brat, coke-snorting millionaire pop stars with the attention span of a goldfish have decided they've had enough of this Labour Government should cause no lost sleep (Blair dream disappears with a pop, March 11).

The Government wasn't elected to keep pop stars happy, but to make Britain better. With young people getting off the dole thanks to the windfall tax on utilities, with more money for schools and hospitals, the Government has done much to improve people's lives. The wonder-kinds sold CDs whether there's a Tory or a Labour government. Unemployed teenagers get a real chance for work and training only when there's a Labour government.

Paul Richards, London.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters. The Country Diary is on page 10

new left review

'epitome of egalitarian economics and progressive thought'
THE GUARDIAN, January 1997

- Oskar Lafontaine explains how the German SPD will defy the logic of globalisation and social dumping.
- Pierre Bourdieu urges us to resist economic fatalism in redefining a social Europe.
- Ken Coates MEP outlines an alternative economics in Europe to overcome the scourge of mass unemployment.
- Desmond Ryan indicts the forces wrecking British universities while Tithi Bhattacharya explains how direct action by students at SOAS defeated a plan to charge for library use.
- Donald Sassoon, Günter Thierborn and Geoff Eley explore convergence and disenchantment on the European Left.
- Judith Butler explains why culture defines both oppression and liberation, while Alex De Waal explores the reality of slavery in the Sudan.
- Kitty Hauser questions, and Dave Beech and John Roberts defend, the celebration of the philistine in the New British Art.

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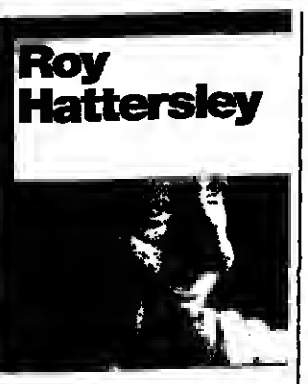
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Endpiece: Myra and justice



HAVE become a camp follower, lower than the Salvation Army. Although I neither share their faith nor sympathise with all their moral imperatives, the more I see of God's Commandos, the greater my admiration for them grows. Last week — at the conference of their "front-line" social workers — I was offered a captain's tunic. The gesture was a joke — not least because the uniform was several sizes too small for me. But as I responded with a refusal to enlist, I longed to wear the armour of moral certainty. It would be almost worth giving up drink.

It is the belief in redemption through good works which attracts me to the Blood and Fire Brigade. Jesus certainly saves. But a brief trip to the penitent form — the place of contrition and absolution — is not enough. The prospect of eternal life depends, at least in part, on helping others. And, because the Salvation Army is an equal opportunities religion, no sinner is beyond hope in the next world and help in this. Even in the stern days of William Booth, little distinction was made between the deserving and the undeserving poor. Much of the Army's social work is concentrated on the conventionally least-deserving members of society.

Apart from my views on the consumption of alcohol, last week's conference seemed to agree with every word in my brief address. But there was one moment, during the questions which followed, when I felt a chill wind blowing through part of the hall. Asked about reform of the penal system, I replied that, in this country, we send too many people to prison and often keep them there for too long. That provoked a brief

ripple of applause. But I added that the obsession with custodial sentences was illustrated by society's attitude towards Myra Hindley. Her continued imprisonment was, I said, irrational as well as inhumane. That was the moment when the temperature dropped.

There had, I believe, been general agreement with my view on the purpose of prison — deterrence, rehabilitation and the protection of the community from the violent recidivist. My audience was not made up of the sort of people who believe in retribution. Knowing their scripture, they would have insisted that when the Lord said "vengeance is mine", he was warning mortals to resist the demands of that primitive instinct.

Yet for a proportion of the audience, the idea of committing Myra Hindley's life sentence was clearly not so much unacceptable as morally repugnant. Perhaps I should have been heartened that a majority of the conference was on my side. But I was momentarily depressed by what the reaction of the minority illustrated about the world outside the hall. If

amongst three hundred of the most compassionate people in the country, at least a small proportion believed that, for Myra Hindley, "life should mean life", what do they think about that unhappy woman in provincial golf clubs, City of London wine bars and at rural fox meets.

The obvious answer is that too many people think what they have been taught to believe by the worst tabloid newspapers. Their prejudiced opinions are reinforced by the satanic picture of Myra Hindley, which is printed every time that her name appears in the papers — even though it bears virtually no resemblance to how she looks now.

But there is more to her place in English demonology than the publicity of the popular press. It is something to do with her age, something to do with her once-blond hair, something to do with her moors on which the ghastly rites were carried out. By their nature, moors (from The Hound of the Baskervilles to Jane Eyre) are the mysterious backdrop to gothic menace. The impres-

sions which those grim television pictures created thirty years ago is still more important in forming public opinion than the reality of Myra Hindley's repentance.

MYRA Hindley now occupies in almost unique places in the collective British psyche. It is probably neither right nor reasonable to make comparisons between acts of absolute evil and arrange them in order of horror or sin. But — terrible though her crimes were — Myra Hindley no doubt believes that even more terrible deeds have been done in this country since her conviction. They too have been reported in detail during the trials of the monsters who committed them. But is Myra Hindley who has become the national symbol of vice and degradation.

Putting the unhealthy comparison aside, the one rational argument for keeping Myra Hindley behind bars is the justification of prison which I did not include in the original list which I offered the Salvation Army — not least because I am dubious about its justification. Pun-

ishment is necessary, we are sometimes told, to demonstrate society's abhorrence of the crime for which it has been imposed. The murders on the Saddleworth Moors is the crime which we abhor the most. So its perpetrator must be the subject of the most severe penalty in modern history.

Democrat though I claim to be, I do not believe that popular opinion is a decent way to determine the severity of its judicial punishment; the Lord Chief Justice is right. Myra Hindley's future should be determined by more objective criteria than mass emotion. Would she do it again? Is she still a monster who lives beyond the boundaries of decency? Is her continued incarceration likely to deter other potential criminals from committing such crimes?

To each question the answer must be an emphatic no. So she should be released. But if even a handful of the Salvation Army "front-line" troops cannot bring themselves to pardon a sinner come to repentance, I fear that she will remain outside society for ever.

Quick fix would work wonders

Long-sighted view ignores urgent needs

Larry Elliott

HERE is a prediction. The Chancellor will wake up on Wednesday morning to headlines like "Brown's Budget Bore" or "The Big Snooze". All the signs are that this is not going to be a whizz-bang Budget with tax cuts sprayed all over the place. It will be a package of intricate reforms designed to make the labour market and the tax and benefits system work more efficiently.

Put simply, the policy works in think-tanks will believe all their birthdays have arrived at once. Almost everybody else will be bored to death. That is a shame because this could be an important Budget, a reforming Budget and possibly a radical Budget. In years to come it may be seen as one of the few fiscal packages that have made a real difference to the way the economy functions.

There is little doubt that Mr Brown wants his first real Budget to carry some clout. After all, with no monetary policy to bother about and with Britain declining to join the single currency in the first wave, he has not had a great deal to do but worry about fiscal policy.

wherewithal to finance his programme and will even be free of the one remaining shackles — the commitment to stick by the Tory spending totals for two years — by the time the next Budget rolls round. By contrast with former Labour chancellors, he starts from a position of strength. The size of the Government's majority means he is not under pressure to do daft things for political reasons (as were Jim Callaghan in 1974 and Denis Healey in 1974). The public finances are sound and the economy is in good shape.

In many ways, Mr Brown's position is similar to that faced by Nigel Lawson at the time of his first Budget, in 1979. At that time, a lot of painful decisions have been taken by the previous chancellor and the new occupant at the Treasury is able to push through a radical supply-side programme on the back of an improving economy.

There is one glaring difference: the exchange rate. By the time Mr Lawson became chancellor, the pound was falling rapidly from the levels reached in the early 1980s; over the past two years it has climbed by more than 25 per cent.

Mr Brown has insisted (ad nauseam) that this will "not be a Budget with quick fixes for the short term. The Budget will be an investment Budget for the long term, laying the foundations to build a more dynamic and successful economy."

Brown has the wherewithal to finance his programme and is starting from a position of strength

the pre-billing has been cynical disinflation, the first thing to say about Mr Brown is that the philosophy underpinning the Budget makes a welcome change from that of his Conservative predecessors. Criticism from parts of the left that has greeted the proposal for a Working Families Tax Credit has often ignored the fact that the proposal is based on the principle that any help should be disproportionately aimed at the poor and weak rather than the rich and strong. All of the main measures flagged in advance — the WFTC, the changes to national insurance, the 10p tax band and the help for children — are based on the premise that the Government should try to roll back inequality.

The real test is whether Mr Brown is prepared to put serious amounts of money behind his anti-poverty programme. If so, the spatchcock system for ensuring that the credit does not cut across the principle of independent taxation or lead to purse-wallet transfers will be seen as largely irrelevant. For many of those living on the breadline or just above, the question of who gets the money is secondary to being able to feed the family properly.

The Chancellor has the

areas where a long-termist approach is admirable — but about managing the economy. It is the one chance Mr Brown has to alter the composition of demand, and a short-term fix is precisely what is needed to get sterling down to a more tolerable level. As Alison Colville of *Financial Times* said last week, the implication is "that if you look after the long term, the short term takes care of itself".

Obviously it doesn't. A short-term fix was precisely what was needed last July, when Mr Brown missed the opportunity to rebalance the economy with an aggressive squeeze on consumption. Fiscal policy was tightened but, with consumers rolling in money from the flotation of munitions, it was tightened in the wrong places.

In any case, the idea that "quick fixes" are anathema to the Chancellor is patently absurd. Last October, when Frank Dobson warned that the NHS would run out of cash during the winter and that the upshot would be endless media stories about cancelled operations and closed wards, did Mr Brown say: "Sorry, Dr. Brown, we're all long-termists now"? Of course not. He grabbed some cash from the Department of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Defence, and quickly announced £300 million of NHS sticking plaster. Anybody who believes there will not be another "quick fix" for health (and education) tomorrow has taken leave of their senses.

The Chancellor is concerned about the impact of the strong pound, but one of the weaknesses of the divide-and-rule policy framework he has established is that it is much harder to ensure that monetary and fiscal policies beat as one. Mr Brown may feel that the present configuration of policy is tight enough, but that may not be



Tax incentives that provide no real relief

Debate
Edward Troup

THE history of tax raising is littered with the expensive wrecks of misguided tax reliefs. As the Budget approaches, the number of siren voices calling for more tax breaks grows. But the tax system's function is to raise money for government, not to cure economic or social ills. Gordon Brown should strap himself to the mast of rectitude and plug his ears to the blarney of lobby groups.

The arguments for pursuing policy aims through the tax system can seem compelling: the taxpayer sees a tax break as a way of removing a disincentive to socially or economically productive behaviour. Governments see tax reliefs as achieving political ends in a way compatible with free market economics which does not count as public spending. None of this stands up to scrutiny: lobbying for a tax break is simply a polite way of asking for a cash handout. Tax breaks invariably have unanticipated effects and turn out expensive and difficult to control.

Labour's first Budget, introduced to "promote employment, investment and opportunities in the film industry" is open to the same criticism. The claim that better returns to film promoters will result in a greater willingness to invest in more marginal projects is identical to the reasoning behind the Conservative government's disastrous Business Expansion Scheme, which gave tax breaks for investment in new companies to encourage more innovative investment. In reality that scheme simply encouraged the promotion of guaranteed-return schemes to enable investors to pocket the tax relief without taking any risk. It was brought to a halt only after costing the Exchequer many millions of pounds.

The tax break for small British films may not cost as much as the Business Expansion Scheme, but already the word is it is being used to subsidise what might be best described as more downmarket productions. (Perhaps this could be dealt with by inland Revenue rules prescribing a maximum amount of nudity in any film benefiting from tax relief.)

Tax reliefs create economic distortions which can only result in a less efficient allocation of resources.

All tax distorts behaviour and discourages activity at the margin. Government should design a broadly-based tax system minimising distortions for everyone, rather than creating reliefs which add to the distortions and have unpredictable results. If the Government reduced your income tax, would you work more (as you would now get a better return for doing so), or less (because you can earn the same net income in a shorter time)? The last Conservative government thought it knew the answer in espousing the virtues of lower marginal tax rates "to sharpen incentives" (i.e. encourage more work). But the truth is it all depends on who you are. At the top end of the income scale lower marginal tax rates probably encourage more work. At the bottom end the reverse may well be true. The taxi driver works the extra hours to pay the bills, not to maximise his return. The same analysis is true in the case of every special tax relief: the Conservatives introduced tax relief for profit-related pay, designed to link remuneration more to the profits of the employee. Because the tax-free element outweighed any likely variation in pay, this was used mainly as a means of reducing the tax bill, and was shared between employers (in lower pay rises) and employees (in higher post-tax pay). The tax break for the British film industry given in

ANY economic activity, and the pricing of the components which make it up, is the product of an intricate series of bargains and negotiations, the details and dynamics of which are ultimately unknowable. Using the tax system to adjust the price of one of these components — the profit or income to one of the many participants — has to certain outcomes, other than that other individuals or businesses will suffer the double burden of having to pay more tax and seeing the market rigged against them by what is, in effect, a state subsidy.

A tax break is a government subsidy with a difference. It is poorly targeted, has unpredictable results. Taxpayers already carrying on the favoured activity will pocket the handout and continue as before. Those who are not will find ways of taking the money while altering their behaviour as little as possible. Most of the cost to the Exchequer will go to the professional advisers needed to find a way through the mass of rules in which every tax break is packaged. Before the Chancellor announces tax breaks for entrepreneurs, or for the losses of hi-tech businesses, as it is rumoured he will, he should study the lessons of the past.

Edward Troup was special adviser on tax to former chancellor Kenneth Clarke

His sweet dreams are made of this

Worm's eye
Dan Atkinson

HERE is all you will need to get to grips with the Budget — your very own Brown-speak dictionary.

I present this Budget against the strongest economic background for decades. Thanks to the Tories.

But there remain grave structural weaknesses: introduced by myself.

I turn first to the world picture. Where's my copy of the Economist?

Asia has seen turbulent conditions: Ha, ha, ha.

And there has been slow growth in Europe: Tee-hee.

I am glad to say we have ridden out the storms: Until the stock market collapses.

We have set the Bank of England free: This was a fashionable idea in '92, when I became shadow chancellor.

We have taken a positive approach to the single currency: Ditto.

And set up an all-purpose fi-

nanial regulator: Ah, 1992! What was that great Annie Lennox hit?

Training has now been fully modernised: Yes, all my best ideas come from 1992.

The battle against inflation is relentless: In fact, all my ideas...

I am determined to show prudence in public spending: Don't mention the Dome!

I turn to taxes on businesses: Those that pay any.

Capital allowances... roll-over... third-year depreciation... Go to sleep before I get to personal taxes.

Alcohol and tobacco cannot escape their share of the burden: But don't worry, our black marketeers are up to the job.

Petrol taxes, too, must make their contribution: Except on the petrol used in very fast cars carrying Team Rothmans stickers.

Those items hitherto lightly taxed for reasons of history or sentiment must come within the tax net: Wheelchairs, guide dogs, hearing aids.

Taxation is a rational business or it is nothing: Church buildings, charity shops.

Taxes on income will not be raised: All that much.

This is a budget for exports: Other countries?

For growth: Ditto.

For investment: Oh, good guess!

I humbly commend this Budget to the House: We are the masters now.

Tourist rates - bank sells

Australia 2.98	Germany 2.95	Malaysia 8.29	Singapore 2.83
Austria 20.72	Greece 487.21	Malta 0.64	South Africa 8.02
Belgium 60.70	Hong Kong 12.47	Netherlands 3.30	Spain 247.98
Canada 2.275	India 65.45	New Zealand 2.77	Sweden 12.95
Cyprus 0.882	Ireland 1.187	Norway 12.27	Switzerland 2.83
Denmark 11.29	Israel 5.94	Portugal 300.54	Turkey 372.700
Finland 9.03	Italy 2.821	Saudi Arabia 8.10	USA 1.82
France 9.88			

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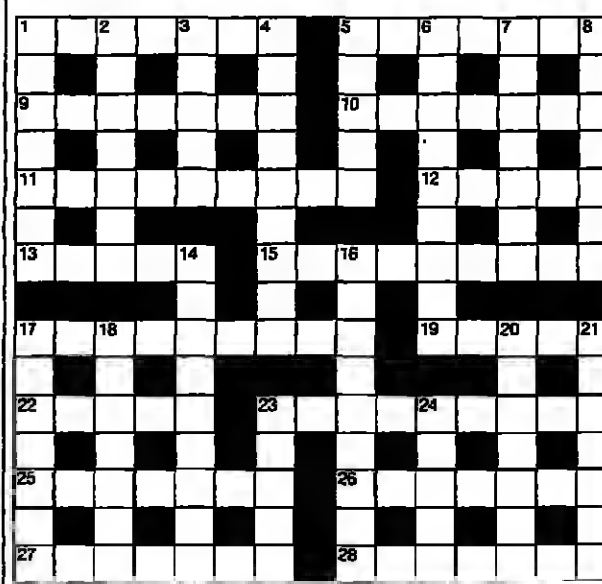
Indicators

TODAY — GER: Trade balance (Jan).
TOMORROW — UK: The Budget (3.30pm).
UK: Retail prices (Feb).
UK: PSBR (Feb).
WEDNESDAY — UK: Retail sales (Aug).
UK: Unemployment rate (Feb).

UK: Average earnings (Feb).
THURSDAY — GER: Bundesbank Council Meeting.
UK: Provisional MA (Feb).
UK: MA Landing (Feb).
UK: Building Societies net new commitments (Feb).
FRIDAY — US: Treasury budget. Source: HSBC Markets Ltd.

Guardian Crossword No 21,223

Set by Crispa



- Across**
- 1 Calls back about a man's lustuous coat (7)
 - 5 Articles on painting "Au Fond" (2,5)
 - 9 A drill used in road-making — an invaluable device (7)
 - 10 Obscure mother interrupting a social worker (7)
 - 11 Small daughter is offensive, but let off (6)
 - 12 The decline of the party without money (5)
 - 13 Place for a physician (5)
 - 15 Finds a record past bearing (9)
 - 17 Approach about cash and temporary accommodation that's effective (9)
 - 19 She'll put food away in the deepfreeze — a terrific amount (5)
 - 22 Survive, though no longer first (5)
- Down**
- 1 Check on a boy's upbringing — it's a disgrace (7)
 - 2 Pleased, oddly enough, to be passed (7)
 - 3 Means of securing some tired at Christmas (5)
 - 4 What the marksman requires is transport to the summit (9)
 - 5 Making notes about a nocturnal mamma's decline (5)
 - 6 The ads one composed in tribute to the dead (9)
 - 7 A number takes a cereal from sheer greed (7)
 - 8 Summing up people (7)
 - 14 Observes focus is a problem for the viewer (3-5)
 - 16 Racist harassment — could well be critical (9)
 - 17 Get rid of pollution and get rich (5,2)
 - 18 Man turning up with a gun, being wet (7)
 - 20 The list must be in order (7)
 - 21 Official reports regarding changes made (7)
 - 23 The story gripping pupils in France (5)
 - 24 Given direction, capture large antelope (5)



WINNERS OF PRIZE PUZZLE 21,216
This week's winners of a Collins English Dictionary are: Alexander Banks of South Queensferry, Edinburgh; Rosemarie Harrison of Walthamstow, London E17; Cynthia Allsop of Cochrane Ripley, Derbyshire; Richard Fender of Sheffield; and Steve Wagland of London EC1.

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AFP 1ST

Football

Premiership: Manchester United 0 Arsenal 1

United wounded by loss of Schmeichel

DAVID LACEY

A FOOTBALL season lasts for months but so much can happen in a matter of minutes. For Manchester United in the space of nine minutes at Old Trafford on Saturday, an exercise in damage limitation became a salvage job.

In the short term United will be less concerned with the consequences of the late goal from Marc Overmars which has brought their hopes of a fifth Premiership title in six seasons within range of Arsenal's anxiety than the hamstring injury suffered by Peter Schmeichel in his gallant but galling effort to save the game.

The loss of a match Manchester United could bear; they are after all, still six points ahead of Arsenal. Wenger's team have three games in hand. But the loss of their talented and talismanic Danish goalkeeper for Wednesday's Champions League quarter-final second leg against Monaco is a bitter blow.

This season Alex Ferguson has been convinced that he has a side capable of winning Europe's most prestigious club honour, and as United strode past Juventus and Feyenoord to qualify for the knockout stage with some thing to spare, the feeling grew that he might be right. On Wednesday night, however, Ferguson will be forced to field a patched-up, partly-fit team against Monaco, who were easily held in a scoreless game in the Louis II Stadium but have a good away record in the competition.

Thus Ferguson finds himself in precisely the situation he set out to avoid. The Coca-Cola Cup was shrugged aside as surplus baggage. In the FA Cup the team were rotated and well below strength when they went out at Barnsley. Saturday's game, like several others, was given a morning kick-off to allow a few more hours of recovery time before a Champions League fixture.

Even Arsenal's goal was partly a consequence of



Tale of two keepers... Schmeichel gets between two Arsenal defenders in a last desperate throw by United as Manninger keeps an eye on the situation

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

United not wanting to take risks with players they would need on Wednesday. For much of the game Gary Neville, having joined Henning Berg at centre-back in the continued absence of Gary Pallister, had successfully curbed the influence of Dennis Bergkamp through the middle. Then Ronny Johnsen was hurt and immediately replaced by David May, who moved in alongside Berg with Gary Neville switched to other duties.

Within a minute Martin Keown's long ball from deep in his own half had caught the United defence still regrouping. A header from Bergkamp, another from Nicolas Anelka, and there was Overmars, in space, onside and with plenty

of time to nod the ball down and take it on a few paces before beating Schmeichel with a low shot into the far corner of the net.

From an Arsenal point of view this was a logical turn of events. From the outset Overmars had been their most likely match-winner, exploiting John Curtis's lack of experience on the left of United's defence and beating Schmeichel on two earlier occasions with shots which drifted just wide of an empty goal.

What followed, from United's standpoint, was totally illogical, given the importance of the next few days. Schmeichel makes a habit, when United are losing with only a few minutes to go, of charging upfield for corners. His mis-

take on Saturday, as Ferguson pointed out, was to stay in the Arsenal penalty area after the corner had been cleared. As Bergkamp brought the ball away, Schmeichel suddenly thought he was Roy Keane and, in stretching to intercept, tore a hamstring. Since United had used up their substitutes, moreover,

The run-in

MANCHESTER UNITED
April 26 Wimbledon (H); April 28 Blackburn (A); 10 Liverpool (H); 13 Newcastle (H); 25 Crystal Palace (A); May 2 Leeds (H); 10 Barnsley (A).

ARSENAL
March 28 Sheffield Wednesday (H); 31 Bolton (A); April 1 Liverpool (A); 11 Newcastle (H); 13 Blackburn (A); 18 Wimbledon (H); 25 Barnsley (A); 28 Derby (H); May 5 Everton (H); 10 Aston Villa (A).

he was forced to boggle through to the end. "I don't think this defeat will affect Manchester United's morale," Wenger said. "The major blow is not psychological, it's losing Schmeichel." And if Schmeichel is out for five weeks, as Ferguson fears, the wound may fester.

Raimond van der Gouw, United's second choice in goal, was partly responsible for Borussia Dortmund's winner in the opening leg of last season's Champions League semi-final. The Dutchman is generally competent but lacks the authority of Schmeichel, which reduces the defence when Pallister is missing. Take away Schmeichel and Pallister against Monaco and United look vulnerable.

Ferguson may be forced to play Ryan Giggs, who has missed six matches with a hamstring injury and would normally return via the bench, from the start on Wednesday. On Saturday, without the Welshman's explosive pace, United's attack laboured.

Tony Adams and Martin Keown denied them opportunities to exploit Teddy Sheringham's heading ability, and on the ground, superb performances from the French pair Emmanuel Petit and Patrick Vieira curbed the influence of Paul Scholes and reduced Andy Cole and David Beckham to peripheral figures. For the first time this season United's football pined for the subtle positioning and astute angles of Eric Cantona.

Arsenal still have much to do to win the championship. Unlike United, cup runs have left them with a congested fixture list, and tomorrow they are at West Ham in an FA Cup quarter-final replay. But Wenger's team are now unbeaten in 10 Premiership matches and playing with confidence.

Crucially, moreover, the temporary loss of an outstanding goalkeeper, David Seaman, has been offset by the prowess of his 20-year-old Austrian replacement Alex Manninger. "We're now looking to win seven league matches in a row," said Ferguson, "which is what we're capable of doing if we get key players back." For the moment, however, only one game matters.

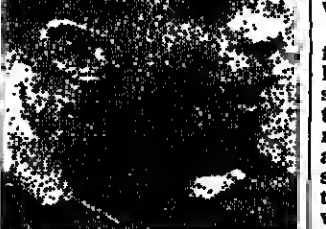
West Ham United 2 Chelsea 1

Vialli manages to lose out

Mark Redding

BEWARE the ideas of March. This was a fourth defeat in five league games since Gianluca Vialli took over and if Chelsea carry on like this the knives will soon be out again at Stamford Bridge.

The player-manager rested himself for this game and, although it would have been an opportunity to ask him whether he was worried that Chelsea might do to him what they did to Ruud Geulth, he ducked the after-



Sinclair... equaliser

match press conference as well. "He's tired physically and mentally," said his assistant Graham Rix.

At least Vialli has won the two games that mattered most: the Coca-Cola Cup semi-final second leg against Arsenal and the European Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final first leg at Real Betis. The trouble is that his players have lost their taste for the bread and butter of the Premiership.

"Our priority has to be to qualify for Europe without losing the Cup," Vialli said. "The second leg on Thursday or the Coca-Cola Cup final." Rix promised, but he sounded unconvincing. Chelsea remain in fourth place in the table but Blackburn, Derby and Leeds are making up ground, as are — quick intake of breath — West Ham United.

The Irons have recently fallen into an irritating habit of drawing games they should have won. But their traditional perversity remains untarnished and against Chelsea, when they seemed beaten, they turned their noses up at a draw and went for the win instead.

The clearest sign as usual had enjoyed much of the

possession without ever looking like scoring when Chelsea took the lead through a Laurent Chant header in the 64th minute.

That was a cue for the visitors to decide they had expended enough effort and they sat back to consolidate their lead. So it was hard to say which of the two teams looked the more surprised when Trevor Sinclair equalised by timing his run on to Steve Potts's through-ball to perfection.

The winner, fittingly, fell in the 75th minute to the impressive David Unsworth, who was wearing the arm-band in place of the injured Steve Lomas. "It fell nicely and I just lashed it," the former Everton defender said modestly. "It was a proud moment for me, especially being captain."

West Ham have their own cup run to think about, with the FA Cup quarter-final replay at home to Arsenal tomorrow. Sinclair is ineligible but their 20-goal top scorer John Harrison will be back after suspension. Chelsea, meanwhile, must pick themselves up after what was an unhappy anniversary for the club.

Newcastle United 0 Coventry City 0

Relegation shadow falls on Tyneside

Michael Walker

RELEGATION. Now there's an interesting word. Year after year, season after season, it has hung around Coventry City like some annoying old acquaintance who is always on the telephone threatening to make a visit but who thankfully never arrives.

For almost the first season since 1987, Coventry have no such troubles. Rather it is Newcastle who are beginning to worry. Such is their run of form — with only two wins in 15 Premiership games — they are only four points above Barnsley — that Wednesday's home match with Crystal Palace is a "must win".

Titantic imagery is all around and should Newcastle hit an iceberg in the FA Cup semi-final then Kenny Dalglish will face a long and arduous road back to the top of his first full season in charge at St James' Park.

After Wednesday, seven of their last nine games are away from home, four against the top six in the league. Five, Newcastle have scored only 26 goals in their 28 games, a mere 10 away from home, and Alan Shearer has yet to get off the mark in almost 10 hours of Premiership football since his return from injury.

Mary Poppins, as the Newcastle chairman allegedly calls Shearer, should perhaps take some lessons from Freddie Shepherd on scoring, although in his own defence Shearer could point out that regular service is a distinct advantage.

On Saturday neither Shearer nor Andreas Andersson received that Newcastle's midfield showed occasionally but when they hit the brick wall that was Dion Dublin there was no outlet on the wing because Keith Gillespie was absent, presumed disciplined.

Steve Gvozovic had one difficult save to make — and that a sliced clearance by Dublin — so Coventry were entitled to look back on this as two points dropped. Had Viorol Moldovan converted either of two simple first-half chances, Coventry would have found themselves only six points behind Chelsea this morning with a game in hand.

Everton 1, Blackburn Rovers 0

Madar the Oscar winner

Ian Ross

IN SELECTING the moment finally to embrace the more agricultural aspects of English football, Mickael Madar displayed the impeccable timing which French males have always claimed to reserve for the hourglass.

Having been hit by a run-of-the-mill Anglo-Saxon challenge, Madar fell with the theatrical flourish of a method actor, head rolling in a manner designed to display his discomfort to the faithful.

The magic response was rushed out to the stricken Gaul and the Everton manager Howard Kendall asked the substitute Danny Cadamarteri to make ready. But not as swiftly as he had fallen, Madar was up again — pushing away the physio and his dripping sponge, pushing out his chest in readiness to renew battle. *Vive La Résurrection!*

Four minutes later, as the Blackburn Rovers goalkeeper Tim Firth scrambled to his line towards him, Madar

rose majestically to head in John O'Kane's delicious cross from wide on the right flank. His joy was uncontainable. In his dance of celebration he covered considerably more ground, and with considerably more grace, than he had managed in the previous 60 minutes.

"Since that now-famous miss against Liverpool at Anfield, Mickael has been a bit low," said Kendall. "He felt he cost us the game that day. Today he was just happy to score such a crucial goal."

A crucial goal indeed. It may come to represent a watershed in an otherwise wretched season for the Merseysiders, who on Saturday were again without Duncan Ferguson, their captain, focal point, talisman and saviour designate.

Mercifully he returns from suspension in the next game, but Kendall did not hesitate last week to set himself on a collision course with his chairman Peter Johnson by demanding the chance to in-

vest on players before next week's transfer deadline. He made a similar demand of a chairman back in 1993 during his second spell in charge at the club, only to resign after being refused the princely sum of £1.4 million to buy the then Manchester United forward Dion Dublin.

Dublin is now an England international, valued at £5 million. Everton are still hoping about on the lip of a precipice and Kendall's wisdom, it would seem, is still being questioned. Draw your own conclusions.

Everton deserved to win this scrappy game, not because their football was any better than Blackburn's — it wasn't — but because, as the afternoon began to drift away, they showed the greater desire for three points.

The Blackburn manager Roy Hodgson claimed his side had played well and were "unfortunate to lose". It was an easy argument to proffer but a rather difficult one to defend, for Blackburn's superior technique really should have guaranteed them victory.

Tottenham 3
Liverpool 3

Gross point draws blank

Russell Thomas

TOTTENHAM and Liverpool gave an enthralled 30,000 crowd the game they craved and the result no one wanted. After the heat of this exhilarating contest, chill reality soon set in: both teams go back to the well-dusted drawing board.

Christian Gross neatly summed up the contest. "Passion, pace, power, pressure," declared Tottenham's head coach. The last to were most apt, coming hard on the civil war at White Hart Lane last week. So can he be enjoying the job? "Sure," he replied and, as the stern gaze relaxed momentarily, it was just possible to believe him. After a Tottenham performance of "great togetherness", according to Gross, he remains convinced that his team will stay in the Premiership despite Ramsey's dangerous proximity. Again he sounded as if he meant it. "We have it at our feet and in our hands. Everybody can heat everybody."

Well, not quite. Spurs led three times and could not beat a Liverpool only tentatively nursing title ambitions, despite a memorable performance by David Ginola and, in Gross's view, Jürgen Klinsmann's best game since the German kicked for his team's second goal. "I need these two players as leaders," insisted Gross. His immediate problem was that Liverpool had two leaders in Steve McManaman and the elusive Paul Ince, who produced a startling overhead header for his team's second goal.

A minute from time, McManaman squeezed in the equaliser seconds after Allan Nielsen launched his own overhead kick against an upright at the other end. It was a rollercoaster ride but for McManaman's first and last retaliations, quite apart from his playmaking, Liverpool would never have survived.

"Never say never," mused Roy Evans as he recalculated a championship odds. "We have a reasonable chance." If his heart was stirred by his team's spirit, his head surely told him that yet another opportunity had been wasted.

Gnawing at mistakes after such a feast seems mean-spirited but both managers could not resist. "We're a bit timid in attacking the ball in defence," said Evans. Gross put more flatly: "We made too many mistakes." Liverpool's 89th-minute goal stemmed from "an error of placement behind the defence". He meant his goalkeeper Espen Baard-son, who fatally hesitated before Michael Owen shot against the post and McManaman scored.

Gross was accused of an error of his own in substituting Ginola three minutes before that. He said the Frenchman was tired. Ginola, like McManaman, wandered everywhere; he crossed for Klinsmann's second goal in 10 games, curled in a wonderful 20-yard shot and delivered the corner for Ramsey Vega's header.

Wimbledon 2 Leicester City 1

Lodgers ride their luck out of basement area

Jon Brodikin

JOE KINNEAR could afford a broad grin and confident swagger. He reckons Wimbledon need only "four or five points" to guarantee their survival and Manchester United are next up, at Old Trafford, on Saturday week.

This victory, earned with the help of a penalty escape in injury-time, all but assured the Dons a 13th season in the top flight. Whether they will still be squatting at Selhurst Park remains to be seen: Dublin, Highbury — a possibility if Arsenal leave — or a park in Kosovo all seem preferable to their manager's eyes.

"The hardest thing for us is that, every time we come here, the away team have as much of an advantage as we do," Kinnear said. "We can't train on this pitch so we can't get a feel for it."

His club do, however, have a feel for survival, which is just as well. The current trend in the Premiership suggests that what goes down must come up, but Wimbledon have always argued that relegation might see them fall as dramatically as they rose.

"Middlesbrough and Sunderland are still getting crowds of 30,000-plus so they can afford to drop a division," said Kenny Cunningham, the Dons' stand-in captain. "But with ourselves, even when the ground is full for the top Premiership games, by and large it's the away team that fill it. It's that fear that spurs us on."

It is hard to imagine Wimbledon being afraid of anything. The forward line they started with on Saturday looked, at 18 ft 4 in and almost 40 stone, a suitable back row for Clive Woodward if rugby's civil war were to drag on. Yet with Carl Leaburn and Marcus Gayle wasteful in the air,

it was left to Andy Roberts, a recent signing from Crystal Palace, to demonstrate the value of his feel for the pitch. Chasing a pass from the impressive Michael Hughes in the 14th minute, Roberts looped Spencer Prior's attempted clearance over Kasey Keller from 20 yards.

Leicester equalised through Robbie Savage in the 67th minute when the goalkeeper Neil Sullivan was sent off by a free-kick, but Hughes replied within five minutes from Leaburn's flick.

Leicester had what looked a clear penalty turned down by the referee Mike Riley when Emile Heskey tumbled under a challenge from Dean Blackwell but they scarcely deserved a point. "The referee we had today is one of the best," said Martin O'Neill with an eye on his wallet and Lancaster Gate, "but I don't know what possessed him."

Bolton Wanderers 3 Sheffield Wednesday 2

Bolton bottle holds water

George Caulkin

MASS honking of car horns is usually reserved for special occasions. Victory in war, revolution or election has been known to incite such a wanton disregard for the Highway Code, but how many times after a scrappy game of football in Bolton?

Yet it happened outside the Reebok Stadium on Saturday evening as traffic inched towards the M61, horns blaring in joy, triumph and relief. The reason was obvious enough for the first time since December 1, Bolton Wanderers had given real succour to their dwindling hopes that relegation might be avoided.

Colin Todd had called for "bottle" and it came in milk-float proportions, gold top and all. "The one thing we had to do was win," the manager said. "It shows we've got character in this team."

If their talent and potential have never been in doubt, they had stilled the First Division title with 98 points last season — Bolton's application and unity of purpose

have. Off the field Todd has clashed with Peter Beardsley and Jamie Pollock, and on it his side have habitually sulked when events have not traced their allotted course.

Sheffield Wednesday took the lead on merit after 26 minutes when Andy Booth converted Earl Barrett's centre, and in the second half they equalised when Peter Atkinson shot from a tight angle after high jinks by Paolo Di Canio and a deep cross from Mark Pembroke. But within four minutes of Booth's goal Per Frandsen had replied with a dipping, bending shot from the edge of the area, and after eight minutes of the second half Bolton had gone in front. Nathan Blake converting Alan Thompson's corner.

An element of retribution for Bolton's 5-0 defeat at Hillsborough in November was gleaned from the penalty spot, Thompson scoring after John Newsome's handball. "Bolton realised that it was their last throw of the dice and they battled very hard," said Wednesday's manager Ron Atkinson. They will continue to tumble — fluffily or otherwise — from here on in.

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The Guardian Sport

Monday March 16 1998 www.theguardian.co.uk

West Indies face record task of scoring 375 to win



Turning point... Mike Atherton and Alec Stewart cross during the century partnership which underpinned England's lead of 374

West Indies v England: fifth Test, fourth day

England throw down gauntlet

Mike Selvey in Bridgetown sees England declare in a commanding position

A CENTURY opening stand — with glory be, a half-century from Mike Atherton — but England in control of the fifth Test yesterday. By late afternoon, sensible positive batting had taken England to a declaration, setting West Indies 375 to win in a full day plus 19 overs last night.

That is a fourth-innings target West Indies have never yet achieved, and only dreadful bowling or a complete change in the character of the pitch should prevent England levelling the series.

England had begun the day only two overs into their second innings, with a lead of 143 and a feeling, after a terrific display from all the bowlers on Saturday, that they were in a position to run the game. In the next 2½

hours Atherton and Alec Stewart, feeding off the confidence gained from the first-innings lead and benefiting from a pitch which, though turning still, had lost some pace, scored 101 for the first wicket. It was the sixth time they had opened a Test innings with a century stand, their fourth against West Indies and second of the series.

Stewart was eventually out for 48, well caught low down at slip by Brian Lara as he slashed at Ian Bishop, and 10 overs later Atherton was caught at the wicket attempting to run the same bowler down to third man. By then, though, Atherton had reached 64, his first half-century in 17 Test innings since he made 77 against Australia at Lord's last summer.

Brisk contributions from

Mark Butcher (26), Nasser Hussain (46 not out) and Graham Thorpe (38 not out, including three fours off no-balls in one Curtly Ambrose over) kept the momentum going and England declared 45 minutes after tea at 233 for three.

Atherton's run came at a time when the well appeared to be running dry, so the way he began to move rhythmically into line bodes well for the final match of the series in Antigua which begins on Thursday.

His success, however, does cloud the issue of the one-day games following that match. For this five-match series England, for the first time on a major overseas tour, have selected a squad of limited-overs specialists, the bulk of whom played so enterprisingly in Sharjah before Christmas. Some of the Test party will be told personally by the chairman of selectors David Graveney today that they will be going straight home from Antigua.

Graveney will attempt to convey to Atherton that despite his runs here he ought to stand down from the one-day captaincy in favour of Adam Holoake, who led the side in Sharjah. Before this tour began, it had been expected that Holoake would be allowed to carry on the good work here, but Graveney, a supporter of the idea, was outvoted by his co-selectors Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting, significantly both former England captains.

Graveney knows that the decision has created resentment in a side that essentially is Holoake's. They feel he-trayed. Atherton cannot be expected to reproduce the tremendous spirit created in Sharjah, and it will be Graveney's task to make him realise that, although he may have a part to play as a batsman, the England one-day side moved in a different direction in the autumn and should be allowed to continue unimpeded.

Accepting that argument

would be an honourable thing for Atherton to do and bring him great credit. After this hard series he might even enjoy it. It remains, though, a forlorn hope.

This has not been a Test without controversies. Stewart's slip catch to dismiss Shivnarine Chanderpaul on Saturday is still ranking in the West Indies camp. Replays clearly show that rather than the batsman squeezing the ball into the ground, or hitting the ground at the same time as the ball took the edge, it clipped the bat on the full, perhaps as much as six inches up the blade, before bouncing and flying to slip.

All sorts of accusations were made and Stewart and Lara were involved in animated discussion at close of play. The chances are, though, that no one realised quite what had happened. One hopes so, anyway. Certainly a television replay would have cleared it up in an instant.

Atherton's flicked V-sign to the departing Philo Wallace on Friday evening is another matter. It was not seen by spectators, nor at the time by TV. Instead it was photographed quite by chance and an issue made of it. A sense of perspective needs to be kept. Such a gesture, whether seen or not, is contrary to the ICC code of conduct but in mitigation it happened while tensions were running high, with Atherton's fast bowlers being humiliated.

He realised what he had done and instantly regretted it. What let him down once more was the appalling PR of the England and Wales Cricket Board. A like honesty — "best of the moment" — much regret, apologies to Philo... best of friends" — was all that was required. Instead denials and attempts at suppression compounded the felony and made the board look foolish at a time when it needs all the help it can get.

ENGLAND: First Innings 403 (44 R Ramprakash 154, G P Thorpe 102, Hooper 5-0)

WEST INDIES: First Innings (overnight: 64-11)

1 R Bishop c Russell b Caddick 34
2 C Lara c Butcher b Holoake 46
3 Chanderpaul c Stewart b Fraser 44
4 R Holder b Ramprakash 10
5 C Hooper b Fraser 2
6 D Williams c Ramprakash b Caddick 2
7 M A McLean not out 28
8 M A Ambrose c Russell b Turner 6
9 C A Walsh c & b Headley 6
Extras (118, 102, 107) 227

Total (107.3 overs) 282

Fall of wickets: 101, 128, 170, 214, 221, 221, 256

Second Innings 171 (3-1-54-0, Fraser 32-5-43-2, Caddick 17-4-32-2, Turner 32-15-43-2, Ramprakash 18-7-52-1)

ENGLAND: Second Innings

1 A Atherton c Williams b Bishop 64
2 A Stewart c Lara b Bishop 38
3 M A Butcher c Lambert b Ambrose 28
4 N Hussain not out 26
5 G P Thorpe not out 36
Extras (11, 106, 105) 123

Total (for 3 dec, 71 overs) 233

Fall of wickets: 101, 128, 170, 214, 221, 221, 256

Did not bat: M R Ramprakash, R C Russell, D M Headley, A R Caddick, A R C Fraser, P C R Turner

Bowling: Walsh 12-1-40-0, Ambrose 12-4-51-0, Hooper 21-5-56-0, Bishop 14-5-41-2, Chanderpaul 5-13-0, McLean 7-0-15-0

Umpires: C J Mitchell and E Nicholas

Trouble brews on Tyne as the fans get angry

Michael Walker gauges reactions to allegations about two Newcastle directors

THERE was outrage on Tyneside yesterday after Newcastle United fans read Sunday newspaper reports which alleged that the club chairman Freddie Shepherd and the majority shareholder Douglas Hall frequented a series of prostitutes around Europe, were cynical about the prices that fans had to pay for replica shirts, and had suggested that Geordie women were "dogs".

Newcastle's board will meet this morning to discuss the allegations, which will further drive a wedge between the club and the fans. The relationship has been deteriorating since Kevin Keegan left the club, and yesterday there were calls for Shepherd and Hall to resign.

The board will also be closely watching the reaction of the City to the revelations. The shares, which were floated at 135p last April, closed at 88p on Friday night and can this morning be expected to reach an all-time low.

Even the most politic move, which would see Hall resign from the board but keep his majority shareholding, would not be guaranteed to stop the fall.

The implications for this ambitious club are serious. Newcastle are already said to have the second largest wages bill of any football club in Europe and are intent on developing St James' Park into a 50,000 all-seat stadium in order that they can continue to afford these wages and compete in the transfer market with the Continent's largest clubs. To do this they need to keep their famously devoted supporters happy and committed to the club.

Since Sir John Hall relinquished the chairmanship at St James' during the annual general meeting on December 1 last year and handed control to his son, Douglas Hall has become the single most important individual at Newcastle United.

There was no official comment from Newcastle yesterday and it would appear that Hall, who was out of the country at one of his several residences on the Continent, and Shepherd are trying to ride out the storm.

A temporary solution would be the return of Sir John, although his wife, Lady Mae, would be strongly against the move. Sir John, widely credited with being the financial saviour of Newcastle and given a standing ovation before his last home game as the club's chairman, would also mollify fans.

Their level of disaffection could be measured in the words of David Lee, a 20-year-old unemployed man from Durham, who said yesterday: "They have told us we're boozers, we're being exploited over the kit sales and our wives and girlfriends are dogs. If those two [Douglas Hall and Shepherd] have the nerve to walk back into St James' Park after this they will have to face the consequences. The fans will never accept them after what they have said about us."

John Regan, secretary of the Independent Newcastle United Supporters' Association, was similarly resentful: "They will both have to go. There is no way that both can stay after this. What they have said about the fans, the players of Tyneside and the people who fans turn up to watch every week is appalling."

"We all know we are being exploited over club merchandise and pay over the odds for replica shirts, but we don't need our noses rubbed in it by the people who are raking in the hard-earned cash spent by supporters."

Moses leads Posse in prayer for deliverance



Full flow... Atherton, finding form, on his way to a 64

BC Pires finds West Indies supporters searching for a miracle in the middle

JUST before the first over on the fourth day of the Test, the Trini Posse, whose 50 bright yellow T-shirts constituted the largest — perhaps it would be more accurate to say "larger" — identifiable pocket of West Indian support at the Kensington Oval yesterday, joined hands to be led in prayer by their Catholic schoolteacher member Chris Bereaux, who he-seeked the Almighty to inspire the West Indies bowlers.

The Posse's resident DJ, Sean "Gruff" Grosvenor, then played calypsonian David Rudder's Carnival 1998 hit High Mas, and, as

by the groans of "They of much experience". The Posse leader Mike Moses had observed as early as Friday afternoon that, once England passed 350 in their first innings, West Indies' best hope of avoiding defeat was for England not to be out at all.

The Posse directed their early-morning support towards Ambrose, but, when their prayers were finally answered after lunch, it was their fellow Trini Ian Bishop (who, it is said, leads the West Indies team in prayer before play) who had Alec Stewart caught in the slips by Brian Lara, another Trinidadian. It was again Bishop who got the second wicket of the day, that of Mike Atherton, caught behind the wicket by David Williams, the last of three Trinians on the team.

It seemed as if the Trinidadian prayers off the field were being answered only by Trinidadian players on the field and that Dinanath Ramnarine would have to be brought on to the team by divine intervention for another wicket to be taken, until Ambrose had Mark Butcher caught by Clayton Lambert off the last ball before tea.

As England's stranglehold grew tighter, it began to choke even the famous Barbadian self-discipline. A request had to be made over the public-address system for the Bajan schoolteacher/calypsonian/cheerleader Mac Fingall (whose traditional Bajan tuk band constituted the only other recognisable pocket of West Indian support in the entire ground) not to play music while balls were being

bowled. The Bajan announcer had to repeat his request. Mac probably saw little other than music to enjoy at Kensington.

Once more the England lead passed 350 and once more the best West Indies hope of avoiding defeat was for England to continue batting forever. It is not in the West Indian nature to bat for a day to save a match and recent history suggests that it may even be out of their capacity to bat for a day at all. Though they now have two men on their side who deserve to be described as openers, it seems that it would take either a great deal of prayer from the handful of Trinidadians off the field or an even greater influx from the key Trinidadian on it for West Indies to avoid losing today.

Monday March 16 1998

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